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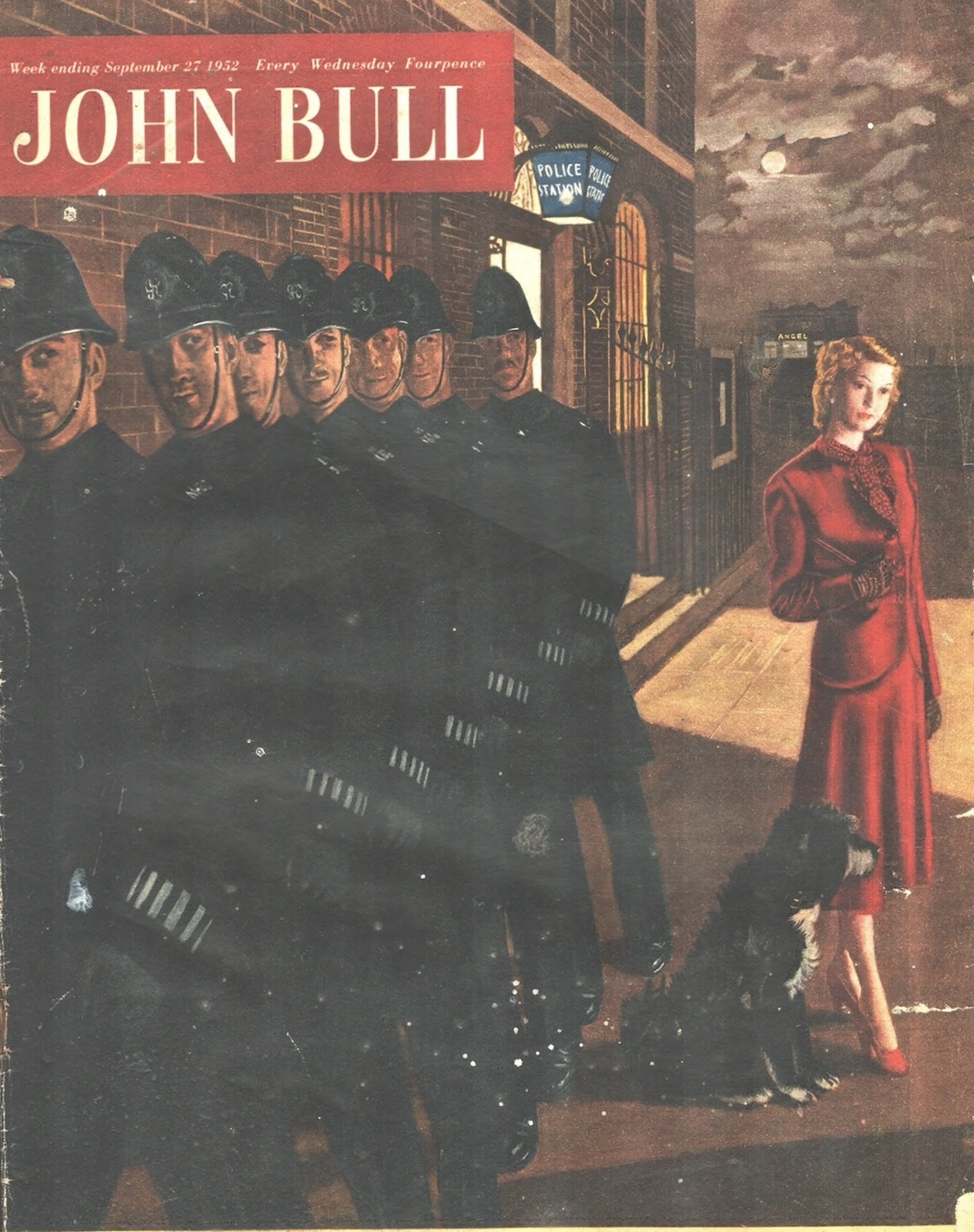

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EDITORIAL

Young teeth

OUR SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICE is in a shocking state. The British Dental Association reports that there are 917 school dentists in Great Britain instead of the necessary 3,800.

What this means in a single county is revealed by Dr. J. B. S. Morgan, school medical officer for Derbyshire, in his annual report.

He has only four whole-time and two part-time dental workers to care for the teeth of 100,000 schoolchildren.

During the last year, one in five of the children in the county received inspection. Eighty per cent were found to be in need of treatment, compared with sixty-four per cent four and five years ago.

THE defects were serious. "Many of the mouths," he reports, "were in appalling condition, necessitating the loss of all the permanent molar teeth and in some cases the loss of permanent front teeth as well. There was a general lowering in the standard of oral hygiene."

The National Health Service lured away the school dentists. For school work they receive only £800 a year, rising by £50 annually to £1,250. The worst dentist has been able to earn more than that "on the Scheme."

MORGAN
"Appalling" facts

MISS PAT HORNSBY-SMITH, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, has said: "It is far better to save the teeth of the young than to provide octogenarians with dentures."

It is. Far better. Yet 9,700 dentists are caring for the teeth of adults while fewer than a thousand look at the teeth of schoolchildren.

As long as only a very small minority of dentists is engaged in the foundation work of prevention, and the great majority occupied chiefly in the mopping up measures, there will always be the cry "shortage of dentists" as futile attempts are made to cope with the overwhelming ravages of decay.

Dentists' earnings must be levelled up. Dr. Morgan says that the School Service could be re-established at a fraction of the cost of the general dental service.

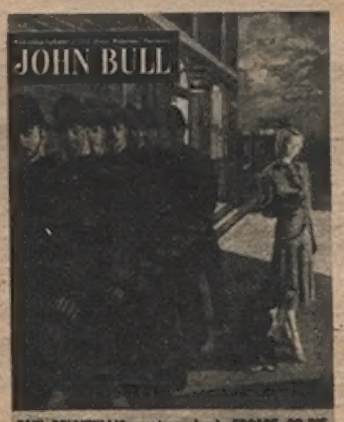
IN the meantime, the School Service could employ more women as "chairside assistants" to inspect children's teeth, clean them, and even, as in Australia and New Zealand, do simple fillings.

"The old adage 'a stitch in time' sums up the position in the country today," says Dr. Morgan.

And he is right when he notes the real tragedy—that the necessary stitch is not being made.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

ONE of the pleasures of life for A. R. Thomson, R.A., is a pint and a friendly game of darts at a favourite pub. On his way recently to one of his haunts in London, he passed a local police station and saw the scene he has depicted on the cover painting. "The girl was obviously waiting for her P.C. 49 to come off beat," he writes. "My guess is that he got a ribbing when his relief arrived."



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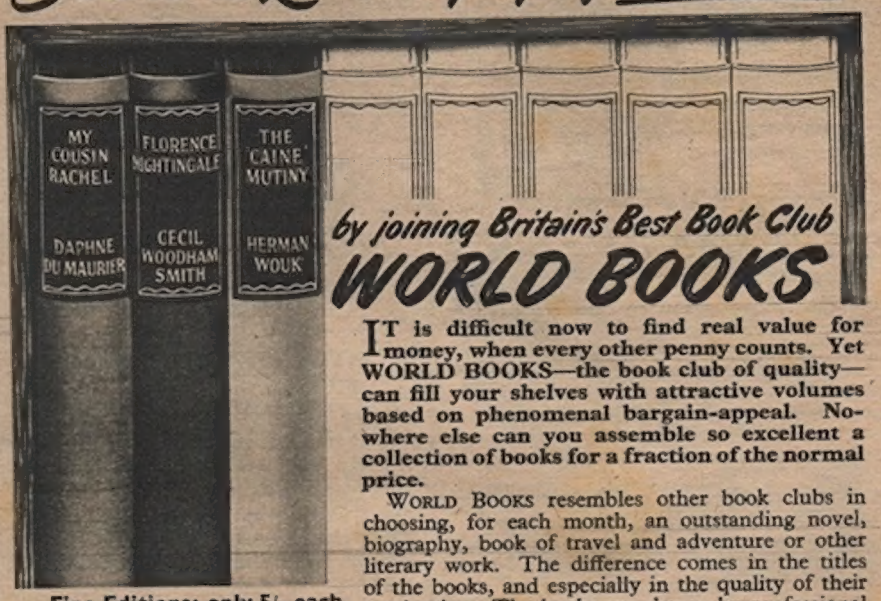

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Free Speech

When wife and husband go to work

UPON our marriage a year ago, my wife and I decided that she should continue in her job for two years before having our first child. The joint income enabled us to furnish our home, have no debts and continue to enjoy, for a time, the small luxuries of eating out, theatres, concerts and holidays abroad. This seemed to be a sensible idea before a family tied us to the home.

But I am surprised at the expressions of my business colleagues when I tell them that my wife goes out to work. She, too, hears comments at her office from girls who state firmly that they expect their husbands to keep them when they are married. I thought that this narrow view of marriage was only common forty or fifty years ago.—R. G. H., Hampstead, London.

Professionals Only

ALTHOUGH much is written about fostering Anglo-American relations, I could find no way of working my passage to America. I wrote to many shipping companies, but the majority did not even reply. — ROBIN HILTON, 136 Walm Lane, Willesden Green, London, N.W.2.

None of the larger companies allows travellers to work their passage nowadays. "Amateur" seamen are not wanted in a skilled job when there is a free sea-training scheme to ensure a high standard of seamanship. Neither is it practical, say the companies, for captains to face the possibility of having to recruit at the port of entry to maintain a full crew.

A Rage To Work

MY grandmother, when angry, would stay up all night to bake bread and cakes for her family of thirteen. My mother, too, polishes the floor most vigorously when inwardly fuming. I have noticed that the most moving poetry is often sad and melancholy, and seems to have been written by men who were angry or despondent. Is there a reason for extremes of feeling resulting in the best work?—LESLEY LLOYD (age 17), 96 Anchorsholme Lane, Cleveleys, Blackpool.

Aladdin's Railway

HOLIDAYING in the Midlands, I sent home by train a biscuit tin containing meat and scraps for my dog. Eight weeks later, when the pup had given up

all hope, twelve mixed rose bushes arrived. Railway officials told me: "We are mystified."—MRS. GWEN M. WHITTAKER, Hamilton Farm, Lydd, Kent.

Russians Cheered

POLYARNOE was indeed as Commander Young described it in "One Of Our Submarines" (JOHN BULL, August 30), including the shoddy buildings, smelling overpoweringly inside of old carpets. I was stores assistant in the destroyer *Zealous* and we had brought a large convoy from Rosyth in February, 1945. A Russian sailors' choir thrilled us with ancient Russo-Japanese war songs at a concert in the Red Fleet canteen. The Red sailors and the townspeople cheered loudly when, during a football match, an English gunner, playing right-wing, abruptly ended an attacking movement by running clean off the jetty into the ice-cold water. Using a nonchalant breast stroke he swam slowly across the harbour in ten minutes—the human limit in that temperature—before running to the shower baths on board *Zealous*. It was his reckless self-assurance that excited the Russians.—PERCY JONES, "Gledhill," Bassaleg Road, Newport, Mon.

This week's instalment of "One Of Our Submarines" begins on page 15.

Rural Welcome

WAITING for my car to be repaired after a breakdown in the village of Bradenstoke in Wiltshire, I made for a local tavern. The landlord welcomed me and introduced me to his wife, who offered to cook a meal. As each regular came in I was introduced. They persuaded me to play them at darts. I knew nothing of the game and was congratulated heartily when I scored. It was a most pleasant evening, and I could not help contrasting the treatment with the indifference shown to strangers in town public houses. — F. D., Kensington, London, W.10.

Taking Notice

NEAR a local post-office building is a footpath reached through a gate, sometimes locked. A notice board recently appeared there with this beautifully painted inscription: "H.M. Postmaster General, the owner of the land on which this passage is situate, has not

dedicated and does not intend to dedicate as a highway, any part thereof or any way thereupon or thereover." Latecomers, finding the gate locked, take the last word for what it is worth and climb "thereover." — R. S. MCNAUGHT, 11 Spring Gardens, Spalding, Lincolnshire.

Real "Philip Archer"

IT is gratifying to know how hard it appears to distinguish truth from make-believe where *The Archers* is concerned, but I must point out that the facts published by you under the above heading ("Free Speech," July 26) refer mainly to my radio life. In the B.B.C. Light programme serial I play the part of Philip Archer, who is a stalwart of the Ambridge Cricket Club (when his eyes permit) and manager of the farm of Mr. Fairbrother, which part is played by my friend and colleague—but not my employer—Leslie Bowmar. In real life I am a writer and broadcaster, who has spent seven years of his life in the universities of Birmingham and Oxford; has been on B.B.C. staff contract as scriptwriter, reporter and interviewer; and who now divides his time between being a professional radio actor, making personal appearances as "the man who plays Philip Archer," and living in the country—writing.—NORMAN PAINTING ("The real 'Philip Archer'").

WHERE THE BOISTEROUS NINETIES LIVE AGAIN

The story of how a London theatre re-creates the gilt and plush era of Victorian music-hall

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

Roof Climbers

YOUNG couples who are having a bungalow built for them should ensure that it has a sloping roof. If the roof is

flat the children, as they grow up, will constantly—and accidentally, of course—be shooting arrows, flying toy planes and throwing balls on to it. The sound of their tramping feet towards the stairs and trapdoor will reverberate through the home as they retrieve their treasures.—MRS. B. W., Essex.

Our Mother Tongue

AN English girl student was showing an Italian woman and her niece over a building. I was following close behind and heard the niece translating for her aunt. Fingering the leaves of a potted plant, the aunt asked if it bloomed. The English girl replied, "Oh, a long thin thing grows up the middle with a purple what's-a-name—spiked." This casual, slangy reply was translated by the Italian girl as: "The signorina says a long thin stem appears bearing a purple spiked bloom." Throughout the afternoon the English girl's almost obscure replies to the aunt's questions were turned into correct Italian by the niece. It made me wonder if all foreigners speak their own languages better than we speak ours.—MRS. J. K., Lancashire.

Quieter London

FAR from the city, near Downe in Kent, we sat on the grass to eat our sandwiches. We were in the heart of the country, but our expected peaceful afternoon was shattered by the constant zooming of jet planes. Our next outing was to the heart of London. We ate our sandwiches by the Serpentine. The city's traffic, so near, could not be heard.—VICTOR H. COLES, 25 Huntly Road, South Norwood, London, S.E.25.

Pipers In Africa

THIS photograph of Pipe Major Peggy Iris and Sergeant Margaret Fraser, of the Dagenham Girl Pipers (JOHN BULL, September 6), was taken during the war when they entertained the 82nd West African Division. They were like a breath of fresh air from home. I don't think that the girls have seen it, as they left West

Africa before the prints were ready.—D. FLANAGAN, 87 St. Andrew's Street, Lincoln.

Letters intended for publication should be as brief as possible and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

"Lux-washed they're softer"

so my mummy says

"I'M A NICE BABY REALLY, but I'm just a bit inquisitive. You see that coal scuttle over there? It's full of the loveliest, shiniest, *blackest* stuff you ever saw! I was finding out about it this morning — *quietly*, you know — and I did get in a mess! But my Mummy doesn't care. She's *Lux-minded*, you see, so my woollies and rompers always come clean and soft as new again."

Wise young mothers insist on Lux for all their babies' things because it's so mild and gentle. Gently it eases out the dirt and leaves your baby's clothes — your own fine things as well — sweet and clean, and *soft*, so very soft.

You can tell Lux-washed things blindfold!

Lux is as mild as baby soap; it contains no soda or harmful chemicals which, while they bleach and clean, can spoil the lovely *finish* of fabrics. No! You can tell a Lux-washed garment blindfold, it feels so whisper-soft! And Lux keeps your hands white and pretty, too. In three sizes: the Magnum-size packet is an economy.

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The lion's mouth is very healthy. Why? Simply—because lions don't eat soft foods.

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WHITE TEETH CAN LIE

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? Just this. It is not enough to keep your teeth white—white teeth can lie. You must do something *as well* to toughen up your gums.

Gibbs SR does *both* jobs for you. It keeps your teeth sparkling-white, yes . . . *and* it toughens up the gums against infection. For it contains **S**odium **R**icinoleate (**SR**), the actual substance dentists use for treating infected gums.

Brush with SR, and you are giving your gums *strength*—the strength lions' gums get naturally through chewing tough, hard foods.

Be quite sure *your* teeth are safe. See your dentist twice a year and brush teeth and gums with Gibbs SR twice a day.

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Few can resist the gay sparkle of an SR smile! SR keeps your teeth dazzling-white so gently—without scratching the protective enamel.

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WHITE TEETH NEED HEALTHY GUMS

Gibbs S.R. FOR BOTH

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GUM TROUBLES —the facts

The cause. The soft foods we eat. Soft foods mean soft gums.

What happens. The smallest scratch on soft gums can allow infection to start from the bacteria ever-present in the mouth.

If your gums are sore and tend to bleed, *tell your dentist at once.*

The answer. Eat plenty of crisp cleansing foods such as apples, celery, salads. And brush teeth and gums twice a day with Gibbs SR to stimulate the gums, make them tougher, firmer.

Sodium Ricinoleate (SR) is used by dentists for clearing up infected gums. SR soaks actually *into* them and fights infections *from within.*

ESCAPE-OR DIE

Authentic stories of the R.A.F. Escaping Society by PAUL BRICKHILL

ILLUSTRATION BY GORDON NICOLL, R.I.

The four ragged fugitives stood hesitantly in the doorway. The Chinese woman eyed the strangers without any emotion. Then she began to smile

Four men against the jungle

Of the seventeen men who had broken out of the Jap prison camp, four still survived. Now a new peril faced them—the unknown terror of the jungle

WHEN THEY HAD regained their breath the four prisoners started bailing with their hands, and slowly the gunwales lifted so that the water stopped slopping into the boat. Shells had torn a chunk out of the bow, but otherwise, by some miracle, there were only two neat holes under the water-line, and McCormac plugged these roughly with strips torn off the remains of his shirt.

McCormac, an R.A.F. aircrew sergeant, and his three companions—Skinny and Roy, two British soldiers, and Donaldson, an Australian civilian of about forty—were the only survivors of the seventeen men who had escaped from a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp at Singapore the previous night. Some had been killed during the break-out and in an ambush with a Jap patrol. The others had died at dawn that morning, when two Jap fighter planes roared out of the sky and shot up the small boat in which the prisoners had fled from the island.

In half an hour the boat was riding reasonably easily. Six inches of water still sloshed over the floorboards, but the four men were exhausted and it was cooler to leave it there. They looked around the sea again for their missing comrades, but there was still no trace of them, and it was then that they discovered that the drum of water, the paddle and the food were also missing.

Away to the east the land still lay thinly on the horizon, and they hoped that the turning tide would swing them in again to the Malayan coast, where they could get ashore unnoticed. By noon they knew unmistakably that the line was getting fainter, and after about three hours they could not see it any more.

Now thirst was worrying them. The heat was heavy and endless, and they lay in the water on the floorboards; it was cooler like that, but by dusk McCormac could feel his tongue swelling. Darkness brought coolness but they could not sleep. Miraculously, round about midnight, rain poured for nearly an hour, fresh and cool, and they lay on their backs with their mouths open and also soaked it up in their filthy rags and squeezed it into their mouths.

At dawn they were alone on the sea. By noon their tongues were swelling again and

McCormac knew that they, the last four out of the seventeen, were probably going to die, too. They lay there quietly.

About four o'clock Skinny, a wiry little gunner from Wales with a broken nose and two teeth missing, said sharply, "God, here they come again!" His voice was frightened and his rigid face stared over the gunwale. They looked and saw a plane, a mere dot low in the air. No one spoke until McCormac said, "It's coming this way." In a few seconds there was no doubt.

They watched it growing larger, undecided whether to chance the bullets or dive overboard and risk being caught by the sharks. McCormac suddenly said, "That's not a fighter. It's too big. It's a multi-engined job." The plane grew swiftly and McCormac saw that it was a big flying-boat. He recognized it and said, surprised, "It's a Dornier. A Jerry!"

"With a Jap crew," Donaldson snarled.

"Japs have got their own flying-boats," said McCormac. Skinny said excitedly, "Let's wave. They might pick us up. We'll have a chance with the Jerries."

"They'll hand us over, you fool," said Donaldson.

Friend—Or Foe?

The big aircraft swept straight towards them, engines swelling louder. Skinny jumped up in the boat, waving his singlet and shouting. The plane swept about a hundred feet over their heads and in a few seconds it was a quarter of a mile past, going away. McCormac did not know whether to feel sorry or glad, and then the flying-boat slowly turned and came sliding back at them. A wing dipped as it roared over and then, about a mile away, it landed in a shower of glistening spray and turned towards them.

Almost hypnotically they watched the flying-boat approach till they could see oil streaks under the wings, the rivets in the dull grey metal and a face vaguely behind the windscreen. A sudden burst on the engine, and the hull swung against the boat. A door at the side snapped open and in the frame stood a white man. He was stocky, young and blond, dressed in a white shirt and slacks. Grinning at them, he shouted something in a foreign tongue. McCormac caught the word "*Komm.*"

"He's German," Donaldson said.

The man leaned out and caught Skinny's arm and heaved him into the plane. One by one the others scrambled after him, helped by the man in white. They all collapsed on the floor and McCormac began to feel sick. He lifted his head after a while and saw the blond pilot and a dark-skinned man looking down at him. For a moment he did not comprehend, and then a wild thrill shot through him. He said in Malay, "Who are you?" and the white man answered in a language very like Malay: "Royal Netherlands Air Force."

McCormac turned with a shout to the others: "They're not Germans or Japs. They're Dutch and Javanese." The others looked dumbly, and McCormac turned back to the blond pilot and said in Malay (which is similar to Javanese): "I am Royal Air Force."

Rescuer's Bitter News

The white man grinned and they shook hands. The others suddenly understood, and there was lots of excited shouting and laughing and shaking hands all round. The little Javanese wireless operator brought them mugs of coffee, and they drank it down. Some cold rice and veal followed, and in between bites McCormac told the Dutchman briefly where they had come from, and how, adding some heartfelt thanks. The Dutchman beamed sympathetically. McCormac asked him then where they were bound, and the Dutchman said they were heading for a swamp near Medan, in northern Sumatra. "Thank God!" McCormac said. "We can get in touch with our troops there."

The Dutchman looked at him curiously and said, "Sumatra has fallen. The Japanese have overrun it." The tragedy must have shown in McCormac's face because the Dutchman went on: "There are no Japs where we are landing. We have to evacuate some people there." He added awkwardly, "A lot of people. A full load. We will have to leave you there."

McCormac asked quietly if they were returning for more and the Dutchman shook his head. He said anxiously that there were some guerrillas fighting in the mountains in central Sumatra and that the four escapers should be able to link up with them.

It was bitter news, but after the rescue from the boat the four could have taken almost anything. They never did find out where the Dutch flying-boat came from; the pilot would not say. All they knew was that it would never happen again in a million years. Even landing to pick them up, the Dutchman said, was an unusual whim, a last-minute change of mind, and all the way to the swamp near Medan, Donaldson kept saying, shaking his head, "It's a miracle, a miracle." And so it was.

They touched down at dusk off a dark line of mangroves, and as they taxied in, people seemed to seep out from between the tangled trees, dozens of them, white and Eurasian, the remnants of isolation, some of them weeping to see the plane. Two of the Javanese crew inflated a rubber dinghy and ferried McCormac and the other three to the mud. A very old Sumatran greeted them gravely; he seemed to be a local official and must have been nearly seventy, bald and toothless, with an incredibly wrinkled face like an old brown prune, and a sarong with the skirt tucked between his skinny legs.

They watched the Javanese ferry the women and children to the flying-boat, making about ten trips till McCormac had counted sixty passengers squeezed into the plane. The engines spun explosively and the plane ran a long way over the water till it lifted into the gloom.

Too Weary To Care

When it had gone the old man beckoned and they followed him into the darkness till they came to a rough trail that led through jungle. Now the excitement was over, unbearable weariness was falling on them and they walked in a kind of dumb misery, almost past caring. Roy was inclined to stagger as though he had been drinking. He was a slightly built, sallow private, almost weedy, and he had had dysentery nearly all the time for weeks, so that he was very weak. He endured it stoically, but had hardly said a word since the escape. McCormac and Donaldson took his arms and tried to help him, and they went about two miles like this till they came out suddenly into a native kampong in a clearing.

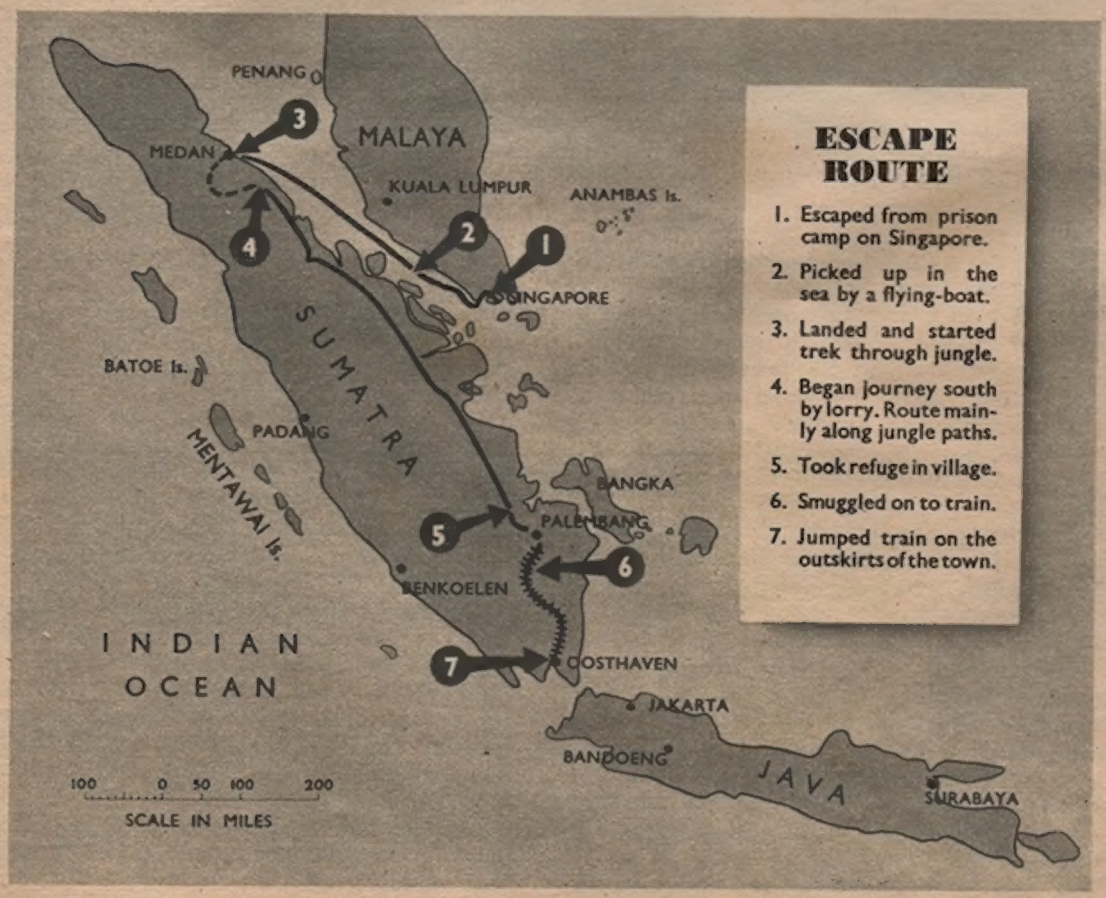
Dimly against the stars they saw atap huts perched primly on stilts above the ground; the old man led them to one, pointed up and they climbed the rickety ladder. Inside they collapsed on the rush-strewn floor. The old man lit a small oil lamp and went out again. In a few minutes he was back with a woman who was carrying a jar of water. She had to refill the jar for them three times, and then she brought a bowl of rice, though they could swallow only a few mouthfuls. Since leaving the mangroves they had hardly spoken; everything seemed so unreal. Silently, they fell asleep.

All the next day they stayed in the hut, except when the colicky cramps of dysentery forced them out into the fringes of the jungle that crowded round the kampong, tangled, thick, spongy and green, and full of still and clammy heat, though only a few pale blades of sunshine filtered through the matted foliage overhead. Roy was so weak that he took an age to climb the ladder each time. He said his legs felt like rubber.

Reward For Betrayal

The old Sumatran came and squatted on his haunches and talked a long time in Javanese with McCormac. They must not stay long in the village because the Japanese might return, he said. They had been through once. Their best plan was to make for the mountains inland where some guerrillas were thought to be living near Lake Toga. Or they might make for Java, where they might find white troops still hiding in the jungle. McCormac said to the others: "Java's 500 miles away. Let's try the mountains first. It'll be cooler there and we can get our strength back." Everyone agreed.

On the afternoon of the third day in the kampong, the Sumatran squatted gravely beside McCormac again and said with impassive politeness that they must leave that evening. A native, he said, could earn 400 guilders reward from the Japanese for reporting a white man, and it was



The first leg of the escape. The men hoped to reach Java and then make for Australia

Charles Edward McCormac. He earned a D.C.M. for his escape, and later became a squadron leader

The village near Medan, Sumatra, where McCormac and his friends sheltered after being picked up from the sea by flying-boat. McCormac took this picture on his return to the Far East in 1945

not wise for them to stay too long in one place.

McCormac nodded. He had been expecting it. All of them felt better after the rest and even Roy had lost some of his haggard look. They ate a lot of rice and chicken and about two hours before dusk the old man took them to a jungle trail. He said the mountains were six days' walk away. It seemed that every native in the village clustered round, chattering and grinning. As McCormac thanked the old man, the four shook hands with him and the old man gave them a toothless grin. The villagers giggled and waved, and the four were filing along the jungle trail, McCormac in front.

Jungle Was Neutral

By tacit consent McCormac became the leader of the party. The son of a British planter, he had grown up in Malaya, and could speak Malay. He also knew the jungle better than the others. For the past two days he had been lecturing them about the jungle. It could be a friend as well as an enemy, he had told them. It could hide them and give them food and water. And it could kill them if they let it. The worst enemy was the kraut, the little black and gold snake about eighteen inches long and as thick as an index finger. It was supposed to go for the eyes, and its bite could be fatal. He had warned them, too, about scorpions, spiders, pythons and wild boars.

They were quiet for the first quarter of an hour as they padded along, keeping wary eyes on every hanging creeper and bush that brushed across the trail. McCormac suddenly said: "We'll stop just before dusk and clear a spot to sleep." The trail curled in and out of enormous trees, with ten-foot thick trunks that towered till their tops vanished in the smoky gloom that filled the jungle, between the dank earth and the tangle of boughs and foliage and creeper that shut out the sky. The odd sliver of light slanting through looked faded and dusty. The air was hot and heavy, and McCormac found the sweat soaking him.

Feeling that the gloom was thickening, he stopped and said: "This will do. Let's get off the track in case someone trips over us in the night." About twelve feet into the jungle they tore a clear patch in the undergrowth and lay in a huddle on the pulpy earth. Donaldson said acidly after a while: "Hell, we stink!" Thirst was nagging again. McCormac said they could probably lick some dew off the leaves in the morning and then they would have to suck stones till they came to a stream.

Skinny suddenly screamed, and they jerked up in fright. He was thrashing about against the foliage crying, "Snake! I've been bitten!" In the darkness, chills swept all of them. A strangled cry broke from Donaldson and he slapped madly at something in the darkness. He was yelling, "It's got me," and then McCormac felt the sharp stab of something in his leg, followed by another in the small of his back, and then another.

He dashed through the undergrowth back to the trail, slapping madly, followed by the others, nearly panicking. Over one of the bites McCormac felt a tiny object moving under his hand. He squeezed it and suddenly knew what it was. He said in a voice shaky from relief, "It's O.K. They're only ants." Slowly, as he assured them, the heavy breathing gave way to salty curses.

"We'd better sleep up in the trees," McCormac said. "Get up about ten feet and tuck yourself in the fork of a branch and wrap some creepers round you." The others would not believe it could be done at first, but McCormac got up on a huge branch that was about three feet thick where it joined the trunk; he wedged himself in that spot, wriggling under some creeper that circled the bough. The bark was spongy and moss-covered, and felt cool. The others tried it, gingerly and with grunts and curses as they fumbled in the darkness. "Like a lot of ruddy hens roosting," said Donaldson, surprised that he felt reasonably secure and not unbearably uncomfortable.

Noises In The Night

As night settled, a scream in the jungle nearby made McCormac's skin crawl in terror till he realized what it was. In the frightened silence that followed he said, "It's O.K. Only a monkey, or maybe a little Malayan bear." The night chorus of the jungle was starting; more eerie screeches abruptly split the heavy silence, and now and then they heard rustlings in the undergrowth. That night frayed their nerves badly.

Dawn was never so welcome. As it filtered through the foliage they lost most of their fears and clambered stiffly, heavy with fatigue, down to the trail. McCormac went rooting round in the jungle and they heard him cry in a minute, "Come and get it." They found him picking little things like hairy chestnuts off a vine. "Rambutans," he said. He showed them how to split and then crunch the nuts, which, surprisingly, tasted sweet like a mixture of fruits.

Donaldson found another bush nearby bearing a lot of large berries that he said looked like prickly pear. "I've never seen them before," McCormac said. He peeled the skin of one and nibbled at the soft pulp inside. "Tastes all right," he said. "Usually if a thing tastes O.K. it's fairly safe." They each ate several of the berries, which had an acid tang and helped them to forget their thirst. They all tore slim branches off the bush, peeled the twigs off to make staves, and started walking along the trail again.

Tussle With A Snake

Every half-hour or so they rested for a few minutes, mainly for Roy's sake. Setting off from one of these rests McCormac suddenly jumped, and there was a confused flurry as he clubbed his stave on the ground by a trailing creeper. He looked up panting and held up the stave with what looked like a little thong coiled round it. "Kraut," he said, and they looked grimly at it. The snake was quite dead, more black than gold, and had a tiny bullet head.

That afternoon McCormac stopped and said he could smell burnt sandalwood. He thought it probably meant there was a kampong near, and they went forward very cautiously till they saw a clearing in front with a few atap huts. Two or three natives in loin cloths were wandering about, and McCormac suggested that they should stay clear and watch, in case there were Japanese about. They filtered off the track into the jungle and lay watching the kampong, getting excited when they saw native women drawing water from a wooden trough. Near it was a pile of what McCormac thought were edible roots like yams.

Night came swiftly as usual, and the sky was flecked with thousands of stars that shed a faint light. McCormac led the way, creeping, into the kampong, and they gathered like furtive animals round the water trough, drinking and lifting their heads at any sound. A cooking fire was burning on the other side of the clearing with a few natives around it, but none of them came near the trough. The four grabbed handfuls from the pile of yams and crept through to the trail on the other side of the village. For

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Woman in his life

by **FRANK PAKIT**

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN PHILLIPS

This morning his life had seemed senseless and drab; and Gwenda was part of the drabness. He saw now just how wrong he had been—wrong about everything

THE DAY STARTED like any other day in Peter Sander's life. At seven, there was the alarm clock whirring—impossibly and yet with the inevitability of fate. He reacted to it with the usual emotions: a brief pang of terrible aloneness and then the struggle to adjust to reality.

He fought the usual battle against sinking back to sleep, tasted the usual staleness in his mouth, felt Gwenda stir beside him, sighing, and heard her get out of bed. For a few minutes he floated in the warm, delicious lake that lies between sleep and wakefulness, where every muscle relaxes in conscious ecstasy, and lay listening to the distant sounds from the kitchen.

This moment was so like all the other countless moments of awakening, past and present were so indistinguishably intermingled, that he half expected Gwenda to come in as a young girl of twenty-two years old, looking as she had when they were first married. But when she did come, bringing a cup of tea for him, he saw that she was thirty-six. Good-looking, yes, still good-looking, but her looks were blurred now by the patina of familiarity.

"Good morning, darling," Gwenda said brightly.

He drank the tea slowly, feeling it cut cleanly down his throat. "It's after seven," Gwenda said. "Almost a quarter past."

"All right." His legs were like two lumps of lead. Heaven would be just to lie there for ever.

"You don't get enough sleep, Peter."

"Is that your pleasant morning way of saying I was out with my friends till one? What about it?"

"Your breakfast is all ready, darling. I have to get the children up."

He swung out of bed, wondering and wondering.

What was it? He loved his wife; he loved his children. His job—well, it wasn't a bad job: staff manager with a big firm. Not what he wanted to do, but whoever did what he wanted to do? You compromised, right from the day you were born, for ever trying to knit the little grey threads of reality into the magnificent fabric of your dreams. Maybe he was juvenile. He had never completely abandoned the dream of a dramatic life—of being famous, of walking in all the sunny cities of South America, the Mediterranean, of being grand and rich.

And now, at forty, he was set somehow in a pattern he hadn't asked for, a pattern that had just grown about his life, a pattern that included enough money to live decently, a few weeks' holiday every year, and this eternal getting up at seven o'clock the morning. But then this was reality—the bread and butter you ate every day. It was too bad if you never got to the caviare or *crêpes Suzette* of life, if you never had the chance to live with a grand flourish. But there was nothing you could do about it. You made the best of it.

In the kitchen, where the sun shot through the yellow curtains, and the warmth of coffee filled the air, he almost said he was sorry for his grouchiness, but he didn't. He only muttered something about how hellish it was to get up in the morning, and Gwenda smiled, perhaps—as far as he knew—hiding her own dreams under the smile.

She chatted over breakfast about the children, about the school, but he hardly listened, looking at her, trying to picture what she had been like before, when she had known nothing about parent-teacher doings, when she had been the spirit of romance to him. Before. The longer you lived, the more magic there was in the word. They had been hungry and avid for life before, filled with an urgency for living that yet was tempered by the certainty that they would be young for ever. They had done mad, wonderful things like going out dancing and sitting up to watch the dawn when they got home.

After breakfast, there was the little kiss for Gwenda, the little kiss for Carol, aged two, and the little pat on the head for Larry, aged eight. And then there was the walk to the bus stop, the usual good mornings to the usual people. There would always be the same bus, the same people, the same newspaper to read. It would go on this way, he knew, until the inevitable day when he caught his last bus and the company gave him a lunch and a gold watch and enough money to exist on. Then, according to tradition, he would find life unbearable without the fascination and excitement of going to his cubby-hole every day, and he would very soon die. . . .

On this most perfect of all sunny mornings, it was a delightful prospect.

It happened when the bus was about half-way to the city. Suddenly the whole world seemed to twitch. There was a tightening about his chest so that breathing became difficult, a swarm of twirling-tailed black spots before his eyes, and a massive pounding in his ears.

In that instant, he thought he was going to die right there on the bus; he recalled, horribly, people he had seen being carried out of houses and office buildings. For a moment he considered telling the man next to him—the man calmly reading his paper—to stop the bus, to get him to a doctor, or something. Of course he didn't. He simply sat still, breathing carefully. It would be indigestion. That's what it would be, naturally, a little indigestion.

It lasted perhaps ten minutes. He knew it couldn't have been more than ten minutes, because by the time he got off the bus it had passed. He breathed deeply again, feeling grateful for the air and the sun, but he walked to the office slowly and carefully, as though there were some infinitely delicate mechanism inside him that must not be jarred. Now that the immediate fear had gone, he could attempt to

His mouth went quite dry. "How serious is it, doctor?" he said. "I'm not afraid to hear it"

She stood there, smiling at him. How beautiful, he thought, how wonderfully beautiful she is

classify his feelings, but the shadow still remained. He had been to the edge of a precipice, and now he clung to the earth, afraid to stand up. It had happened once; it could happen again.

And yet he hadn't really expected it to hit him again so soon, hadn't expected, just as he sat down at his desk, to have the fountain pens and telephone and files suddenly swim like objects seen in moving water, and to feel the terror standing again at his shoulder. He waited for it to pass, hoped for it to pass, clutching the arm of his chair as though it might provide some anchorage to life. It lasted only a minute this time. He buzzed for his secretary, Miss Thomas, noticing how she came in with her notebook open, her pen ready to take down whatever nonsense he might dictate.

"Betsy, I'm going down the road to see Dr. Livesey. Be gone probably an hour or so."

"Oh, are you ill, Mr. Sander?"

He smiled. "Little indigestion. Nothing fatal." He felt the superstitious horror of tempting destiny. "There's an applicant coming in, a Mr. Corcoran. Just tell him to wait for me."

DR. LIVESEY had a small private practice, and a nurse. She was a very blonde young woman, so immaculately clean that she looked as though she had just been laundered and starched, along with her uniform. She wrote his name, and his age, address and place of birth, with some other details, on a card.

"The doctor will see you in just a moment, Mr. Sander. Won't you sit down?"

"Thanks." He flipped through some magazines with a painful attempt at nonchalance. He didn't really see anything, because the terror stood behind him, seeming closer than ever here in the doctor's surgery. If she hadn't put his name on her little card, he would have sneaked out. And yet, he told himself sternly, there's either something wrong or there isn't. Closing your eyes to it won't change anything. No doubt it's simply a little acute indigestion, and you'll go out of here with a prescription and an easy mind. After all, there was never anything seriously wrong with you, and if, by some remote chance, there is now, you'd better find out about it and have it treated.

"All right, Mr. Sander," the nurse said, and he went in.

The doctor was suave and he looked competent. "What's the trouble, Mr. Sander?"

"That's for you to find out," Sander said, in what he hoped was a light tone. "It started on the bus this morning."

"If you'll take off your shirt."

There was a long period of listening and deep breathing and coughing and not breathing, and finally the stethoscope was folded.

"Mr. Sander, have you ever been troubled by shortness of breath? I don't mean the natural puffing that we all do after violent exercise, but a gasping sensation."

"Well——" He thought hard. Of course, there had been many times, going upstairs or playing golf, or just running for a bus, when his lungs had seemed not quite large enough. He had always set it down to a heavy meal, to the humid weather, to something innocuous. He didn't have to any more. "I suppose so. I never connected it with——"

"Any pains about the chest or stomach, or perhaps the shoulder?"

"No," he said. "Never in my life."

The doctor sighed. "You know, a person with a heart condition doesn't necessarily suffer violent attacks."

Sander licked his lips. He had the odd feeling that they were talking about someone else. "Heart condition?"

"We'll see," the doctor said. "Just one more thing. Can you remember being ill as a child—ill for several weeks, I mean?"

"I may have been. Measles and so on. I

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"I never make the mistake of letting them use my Christian name." Leslie Roberts with his Toppers

Mr. Roberts's lovelies put a kick into TV

by DENNIS HOLMAN

They began as twelve girls and a quiet-voiced man who looks like a civil servant. Now they're the streamlined glamour team of the air

THE GREY-HAIRED, soft-spoken man with the rimless spectacles and bulging briefcase, striding into the television studios at Lime Grove, might be mistaken for one of the cashiers or a civil servant. In fact, Leslie Roberts is the man behind the Twelve Toppers, TV's own chorus line, and has six other floor shows currently running in London night clubs. A pioneer of television chorus numbers, he is one of the most experienced dance directors in British show business.

After a programme in which the Twelve Toppers appeared recently, Roberts received telephone calls from all over the country. Most of the callers wanted to know why the Toppers were billed as twelve, since twenty-four were obviously used in a number called *Jungle and Jive*. Actually, the effect was achieved by the use of costumes and masks, so that the girls were half bobby-soxer and half cannibal; appropriate background sets were built facing each other, and opposite cameras shot through cut-outs.

It was pure television technique, in which everything depended on the precision with which the Toppers switched their beat from the jungle rhythm to jive with each change of set. But that, says Richard Afton, producer of *Television Music Hall*, could have been done only by a first-rate team.

Roberts was once watching his Toppers in a transmission of *Music Hall* when he heard a snap and saw the backcloth shudder. On this was the painted scene of a glowing fire; the canvas being suspended from a heavy wooden beam fifty feet long hanging by three ropes. One of the ropes had snapped. A moment later another went. The dance had barely started, and it was an even bet that if the two side ropes were rotten, the middle one, now bearing the whole weight of the beam, was not much better.

"Those were the two longest minutes of my life," Roberts recalls. "I had no means of warning the girls to keep away from the backcloth. They were dressed as cats, and at the end of the dance they had to go right up to the backcloth and lie on the floor, warming themselves before the fire."

As soon as the curtain rang down Roberts and the stage hands rushed on and dragged the girls from the danger spot. They were only just in time, for down came the beam with a crash that shook the set. Next day, a newspaper critic pleaded for something to be done about the background noises with props.

TV Gives Only One Chance

The Toppers spend most of their time rehearsing, and Roberts most of his time rehearsing them, thinking up new routines, or selecting new music and costumes. Eight days of rehearsal—ten hours of almost continuous session—are spent for a total of six or eight minutes on the air. It is arduous work, as Roberts, an ulcer sufferer, knows to his cost. "TV gives you only one chance," he explains.

The story of the Toppers is linked all the way with the growing pains of TV variety. Not so long ago, TV producers never worried about a few minutes here or there. Programmes started late and often ran longer than their allotted time, until an edict was suddenly issued that this slackness must cease. "We were all warned that our programmes must be trimmed to fit the time schedule exactly," Roberts says. "That day, the girls were being transmitted from the Bedford Theatre, Camden Town, and routines were all shortened to keep each dance within the two minutes allowed."

The finale was an involved nautical number in which the compère came on soaking wet in an old-fashioned bathing costume, stuck his head out of a lifebuoy and emptied water from his gum boots. But unfortunately the show overran its time. Without any warning the Toppers were cut off the air as the finale began, and danced it through to the point where the compère got his ducking—to no purpose at all.

Girls Nearly Went Up Too

Roberts's main difficulty is the shortness of rehearsal time; the Toppers have only the day of the show on which to iron out any technical hitches. Once they had to dance round a maypole in peasant dresses against a village scene. Then, as the music changed to boogie, three things had to happen: the maypole went up, taking the girls' dresses and leaving them in tights; the scenery changed; and two dancers, Neil and Patricia Delrino, came up through a trap door. Roberts's first presentiment of trouble was during the dress rehearsal, when the press-studs holding the peasant dresses refused to open and the girls nearly went up with the maypole. That was put right, but two accidents occurred in transmission—a piece of scenery fell on a Topper's head, and Neil Delrino got his foot stuck in the trap.

"If that had been a rehearsal, the girl would probably have collapsed on the spot, and Neil would have had to stop, for he tore his foot wrenching it free," Roberts says. "But it's different before the cameras."

Much of the Toppers' resilience is due to their training, and a large part of that is discipline. Punctuality is Roberts's first rule. He has impressed it so strongly on the girls that when two of them were not ready ten minutes before their cue at a transmission from Shepherd's

In front of a bizarre TV backcloth, Roberts puts the Toppers through a new routine. For six minutes on the air, they rehearse for eight days

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

Bush, he knew that something serious must be wrong. Quickly he organized a search party. The girls were found trapped in a lift.

Leslie Roberts learned the value of discipline in the thirties, when he took charge of American chorus girls sent over for the Dorchester Hotel in London. From there the girls went to the Ambassador in Paris. Soon after, Roberts received a frantic cable to come immediately. He arrived during a morning rehearsal to find the team and a party of admirers drinking pink champagne. The only work being done was by four girls, who were teaching a doddering old reprobate to kick.

Roberts's emergency measure was to cut out drinking and admirers at rehearsals. The girls threatened to strike, and Roberts replied that if they walked out they would break their contract and have to find their own fares back to America. He won, though it was a struggle, he says, to maintain discipline with the girls doing their best to undermine his resolution by inviting him to their parties. He adds: "I have never repeated the mistake of staying in the same hotel as my girls, drinking or eating with them, or even allowing them to use my Christian name." One of the Toppers, Renée Trew, is Roberts's wife. Even she must call him Mr. Roberts at rehearsals.

Chorus Grew Into An Act

Her husband learned his dance-producing from Buddy Bradley, whom Cochran imported from America for his *Evergreen*. Before that Roberts had danced in cabaret, revues and music halls. He had acted in repertory, sung in the chorus of an opera and, as he remembers, starved in most of the big capitals of Europe. After leaving Bradley, Roberts branched out on his own. He claims to have been the first man to bring nudes to London's West End.

Four years ago, Roberts was first asked to produce a TV chorus team. He started with six girls known as the Leslie Roberts Lovelies in *Roof Top Rendezvous*. The number was raised to ten when they became his Music Hall Maidens in *Television Music Hall*, and to twelve for *Top Hat*. They were first called the Twelve Toppers at Radiolympia last year, when they were billed as an act in their own right.

There is no star or head girl; they were built up as a team, and are all paid and treated alike. Most started in dancing schools, and joined Roberts after being selected in open audition. "I always try to pick girls a cut above the average type," he says, "but it is not always possible to spot the wrong ones before it is too late."

Together during a break, the Toppers sound like a treeful of starlings. The chatter is about dance routines and occasional mistakes: about the time Wynne sat down during a rabbit number, or Billie came on in a crinoline with the clothes hanger dangling behind. Once, each carrying a letter, they were spelling out Tessie O'Shea, and made it Shessie O'Tea. "They never were good at spelling!" Roberts apologized to Tessie later.

Often the talk is about Gillian Blair, the Topper who achieved a show girl's favourite ambition: she married the producer. She first met Richard Afton at a club and said, in reply to his query: "Yes, Mr. Afton, I'm in show business; I've been working for you for three months." It was a June wedding at Brompton Oratory, with six Toppers as bridesmaids in lemon ballerina-length chiffon dresses, with lemon picture hats, and pale blue satin shoes and mittens.

Roberts chats to the Topper who is also his wife, as Richard Afton re-designs her costume

They Are Always In Demand

Though show girls have a higher-than-average chance of finding millionaire husbands, most that Roberts has known prefer steady types to rich playboys. They earn about £12 a week, with overtime for outside engagements (such as the film they are at present making), and the garden parties and banquets for which they are in constant demand.

The basis of the Toppers' success is the amount of hard work put in under Roberts's direction at rehearsals. This ground work has proved itself in a crisis. In a *Music Hall* show they once had to sign off with Richard Afton's name spelled out with letters that they picked off the floor after leap-frogging into line. One girl, slightly off beat, fell and pushed over the rest of the kneeling line. "Not only did they pick themselves up in a flash," Afton tells, "but they came up on the right beat."

Probably the team's first hint of success was when the critics, asked to choose their own show, picked the Toppers as one of the acts. But until a quarter of an hour before the show was due to start Roberts was still waiting for the girls' most important costumes. It was a filthy night of snow and high wind. At last a man arrived at Alexandra Palace to say that the costumes were in a van at the bottom of the hill; he had found it impossible to drive up the slippery road.

"Grabbing my angel of deliverance, I rushed down the hill with him," Roberts recalls. "We got hold of the costume hamper, and made our way back up the hill again as fast as we could, slipping and sliding. We had them in the dressing-room with five minutes to spare."

He adds with a smile: "When the critics discussed their own programme, one of them conceded that there were, after all, certain difficulties in a TV production." THE END

David drew the rope out of his reach and shouted down: "Touch those eggs and you stay there!"

The long drop

by DUDLEY HOYS

ILLUSTRATED BY RONALD LAMPITT

Dizzy, sick with fear, she saw one man—then two—trapped below. Now it was up to her

I KNEW DAVID LEE and his wife, Netta, fairly well and liked them both. Off-comers, we call them up here in Cumberland; they were from London, and had taken that toy cottage, Brackenhow, down in the dale, settling there after their honeymoon. It must have been a startling change for a town girl to live in such isolation, with only the beck as her water supply and oil lamps for lighting, and the nearest small town sixteen miles away. We reckoned she must have been in love all right.

What was more, although she admired the splendour of the fells, she had no head for heights. She had told me so more than once. David himself was not particularly good at steepness, though his liking for high country amounted to a passion. He painted for a living, doing an occasional commercial illustration to earn bread and butter, and producing pictures of the fells that somebody might buy one of these hopeful days. He spent a deal of his spare time in bird-watching.

I was helping with a sheep gather one day, and spotted the pair of them hesitating on the top of a moderately awkward pitch. I started to move in a slant down towards them, across boulders and scree and minor bits of crag where it was scarcely necessary to use a steadying hand.

"Hallo!" I called. "Finding it tricky?"

David smiled. Thin and fair and small-boned, he looked almost young enough to be a schoolboy.

"Netta is," he said.

"It's a horrible drop," she said frankly. She, too, gave me a quick smile, but in her fine violet eyes was the flinching effect typical of people who shrink from high places.

"I'm trying to break her in gradually," he said.

He glanced below, then turned to her. "It really is quite easy, my dear."

"Maybe to you." She glanced sideways at

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Returning to base after a patrol, *Storm* flies the Jolly Roger flag, which records her "kills." Edward Young stands second from left on the bridge

ONE OF OUR SUBMARINES (7) by Commander EDWARD YOUNG, D.S.O., D.S.C.

AMBUSHED ON OUR MISSION BY MOONLIGHT

Something was wrong about the signal from the shore. Was it the secret agent—or an enemy trap? There was nothing Young could do but move in and find out

ON MAY 6, 1944, H.M.S. *Storm* departed under secret orders for an unusual mission. We had on board the submarine an R.A.F. inflatable rubber dinghy and three extra passengers: an Army major, a naval rating and a native of Sumatra.

Leaving Trincomalee at dusk, we travelled all the way across the Indian Ocean on the surface as usual. Just before dawn on May 10, we passed to the north of Pulo Bras and dived in the middle of Bengal Passage, about eight miles west of Pulo Weh, our objective.

Pulo Weh is an island off the north-east tip of Sumatra. Commanding the bay on the north side is the port of Sabang, which at that time was occupied by the Japanese as a naval base. The object of our special operation was to land an agent—the Sumatran—to obtain information about the defences of the port. The Sumatran had volunteered for the job and had been under training in India for several months.

We were to land him on the south side of the island and pick him up at the same spot four days later. The landing party consisted of the major and the naval rating, a leading seaman. They were to row the Sumatran ashore in the rubber dinghy and then return to the submarine, repeating the performance in the reverse direction on the night of the pick-up.

After diving we went deep to wait for daylight, closing slowly in towards the island. I spent most of the morning trying to train the major in the use of the periscope. Spread all over the wardroom table was a large-scale aerial photographic survey of the island, and the Admiralty chart was, of course, open on the chart table; the major and I took it in turns to look through the periscope and then brood over the plans.

We had already selected a possible landing place on the south-west coast of the island. Here the photograph showed what appeared to be a sandy beach with a wide clearing in the jungle behind it, and issuing from the clearing a path which led in the direction of Sabang, following a valley between two hills. I hoped it would be possible to use these hills for fixing our position off the landing place at night.

Accordingly we followed the coast down until, at noon, we were opposite the place we had chosen. We closed to within 800 yards and through the high-power periscope were able to see everything in great detail. The beach was

there all right, a fine stretch of white sand, with palm trees nodding over it and on the slope of the hill behind it a large open space clear of jungle. We could even identify the track leading up between the two hills.

But at the top of the beach was a group of straw-thatched huts, and we could clearly see the dark-skinned inhabitants moving about among the trees. The place was unhealthily over-populated from our point of view. Moreover, a little to the right of this village, where the hill curved forward, I noticed a small square construction set high up on the bluff which sloped steeply down to the sea. It looked suspiciously like an observation post or gun emplacement, perhaps both.

However, we had earlier observed a narrow strip of beach about three-quarters of a mile back, and we now returned to examine its possibilities. It seemed to suit our purpose excellently. The two hills were still well placed to give me a fix by night, and immediately behind the beach was another small but conspicuous patch of clearing in the jungle which, if we were lucky, might stand out in the dark and provide a leading mark for the boat party. I took careful bearings of all useful landmarks, and then retired slowly to seaward.

Waiting For Moonrise

We surfaced three miles to seaward when it was quite dark. We had agreed to wait for moonrise before sending the boat party in, for they would need a little light to identify the beach we had chosen. We had an hour to wait. I decided to make use of the time by putting in a short battery charge. Down below the boat party were making their final preparations.

We were not at full buoyancy, but trimmed down to reduce our silhouette, to simplify the launching of the boat, and to enable us to dive more quickly if we ran into trouble. While the officer of the watch and the look-outs concentrated to seaward, I trained my binoculars along the murky shore.. The island was black and sinister. From time to time lights flickered among the huts under the palm trees. It was very quiet.

Presently I was aware of a gradual lightening of the sky behind the right-hand hill. I looked at my watch and saw that it was nearly eight o'clock. The moon was about to rise.

"Number One, tell the boat party to stand by. Open the fore hatch and get the boat up on deck. When the boat is through, shut and secure the hatch as quickly as possible."

As I brought the submarine round on to a course which aimed straight at the patch of clearing, I looked forrard and saw the round lid of the hatch swing open. Lieutenant Wade and the second coxswain stepped out, and began hauling up the still-deflated dinghy. The three members of the boat party followed behind them. The major pulled the string which released the compressed air bottle inside the rubber skin of the dinghy, there was an explosive hiss and the dinghy ballooned out with an alarming suddenness, nearly slithering off the casing as it did so.

Black-faced Desperado

I proposed to take the submarine to within half a mile of the shore before launching the boat. Even so they would have a heavy pull before them, but it would be madness to take the submarine in any closer. When we still had a mile and a half to go, the major came softly aft to the bridge to report that all was ready. With his blackened face he looked like some desperado out of a boy's adventure story. We made a final check on our watches and ran quickly once more over the arrangements. He and his leading seaman would row the Sumatran ashore. I would wait in the vicinity for half an hour in case of trouble on landing, then retire to seaward.

Meanwhile, having concealed the boat, they would push inland to find the path, and when the Sumatran was safely on his way to Sabang, return to the beach. Three hours from the time of the first launching I would return to pick them up. As we might have difficulty in sighting the dinghy the major would flash his torch towards us, making the letter R—short, long, short.

The moon was just beginning to appear over the shoulder of the hill. We had timed it perfectly. The patch of clearing was now easily visible. When the bearings were nearly on I stopped the motors, waited until the way was off the ship, and then gave the order to launch the boat. The three men climbed gingerly down into it and within half a minute they were away, the major and the leading seaman pulling steadily for the land, and the cheerful little Sumatran sitting erect in the stern steering with a paddle. I immediately ordered "Half astern together," and began to retire discreetly to a safer distance.

Everything Went To Plan

We were due to pick them up at ten minutes to midnight. Half an hour beforehand I began to return towards the vicinity of the landing-place, but keeping three miles offshore. To our surprise, fifteen minutes before the appointed time we suddenly saw the letter R flashing at us from not far away, and there was the dinghy already halfway out from the shore and coming to meet us. We swung towards them, and ten minutes later they were back on board.

The adventurers were delighted with the way everything had gone according to plan. In less than twenty minutes they had found the track leading up between the hills. Returning to the beach they had stayed hidden for a time, but then decided they would prefer to wait for us out on the water.

I now turned away from the island and, after running out until we were well in the middle of Bengal Passage, set course eastward to pass out through Malacca Passage, the strait which divides Pulo Weh from the mainland. Part one of the special operation had been carried out successfully.

Early in the morning of the fourth day we returned towards the scene of our operation, diving before dawn in the middle of Malacca Passage. During the day we moved round the corner to have another look at our landing-place, and after nightfall surfaced well out to sea. We were not due to pick up the Sumatran until midnight, so we spent the next few hours charging batteries about six miles west of the island.

Storm's **Oerlikon gun. Her other armament was a three-inch gun mounted in front of the bridge**

With half an hour to go we stationed ourselves about a mile from the shore to await the agent's signal—the letter N (a long and a short) which he was to flash by torch at intervals of a minute, starting exactly at midnight. The suspense of the last five minutes was almost unendurable, and several times I had to put my watch to my ear to make sure it was still going. But at last both the luminous hands were pointing firmly to twelve.

It was a terrible anti-climax when no signal came. Perhaps his watch was slow. But the minutes passed and nothing happened. The moon began to rise over the hill and threw our patch of clearing into prominence. The major came aft along the casing and climbed up beside me on the bridge. It certainly began to look as though something had gone wrong. There was just a chance that the Sumatran had for some reason been unable to get back to the beach on time. This possibility had been foreseen; if either party were prevented from keeping the rendezvous, a second but final attempt would be made the following night. I said: "Well, Major, if he hasn't shown himself by half past we'll pack up for tonight and give him another chance tomorrow."

Signal Was Suspicious

Precisely at the half hour, and just as I was about to give the orders for going astern and falling out the boat party, we saw the signal, a long and a short winking at us from the shore, clear and unmistakable. But there was something peculiar about the exactness of that half-hour delay which made us pause and consider.

Our clocks and watches were still keeping Ceylon time (six and a half hours ahead of Greenwich). Being so much farther east one would have expected Sabang local time to be ahead of Ceylon. It ought to have been well past midnight. However, it was possible that the Japanese here were keeping a time that was half an hour *behind* ours. Perhaps it was a Jap who was making the signal, unaware of the difference in time. Perhaps the Sumatran had been caught and tortured and forced to give the whole show away. Perhaps he had turned traitor.

On the other hand it was still possible that there was a more innocent explanation. His watch might have stopped, and in restarting it he might have set it by a local clock. Or he might have been delayed in his return to the beach and the exactness of the half hour was just a coincidence.

Pick-up Was Postponed

However, there was in any case another disturbing feature of the signal. It was coming not from the landing-place but from a position well to the right. It was, in fact, so much to the right that it was bang in the middle of the beach in front of the village. If the game *had* been given away, it seemed that the Japs were nevertheless not sure of the right spot. But there was still another possible explanation: perhaps the Sumatran had only just got back to this side of the island and not had time enough to find the correct beach.

Whether he was all right or not, we still did not want to land the boat right in front of that village. So we decided to postpone the pick-up until the following night, hoping that in the meantime he would be able to re-discover the original beach. Accordingly we withdrew.

The following midnight we were sitting once more opposite the landing-place. This time, in case of trouble, we had the gun's crew standing by at the gun, with a shell all ready in the breech.

When the signal again came exactly half an hour late we were faced with an extremely difficult decision. As captain of the submarine I had an over-riding power of veto. If I considered that the situation exposed my boat

Young and Telegraphist Stain examine a copy of the ship's newspaper, *Good Evening*. It was edited by Young, and gave information about the ship's activities and summaries of home news

to too great a risk it was my duty to call off the operation. On the other hand, I had no power to order the major to proceed with it if he, on his side, thought the odds against success were too great. The circumstances were now, to say the least, extremely suspicious. At the same time, we still had no positive proof that anything had gone seriously wrong.

The flashing signal on this second night, although not quite in the right spot, was at least much nearer to it and certainly a good quarter-mile away from the village. I did not see how I could abandon the operation on the evidence available. I should have to justify such a decision on my return, and the more I thought about it the more I realized my reasons would look pretty feeble. Besides, we had a duty to the Sumatran, who had, after all, taken a bigger risk than any of us. We could not leave him so callously to what would undoubtedly be a ghastly fate at the hands of the Japanese.

No Time For Dithering

Standing together on the bridge the major and I argued the problem back and forth for a good five minutes. He had the wind-up properly. I could hardly blame him for that; it was he, and not I, who would have to go in to the beach; the smell of treachery was in the air, and the island loomed ominously before us in the dark, like a crouching beast waiting to spring. But however much I might sympathize I was convinced it was his duty to go forward with the operation. One thing was certain: this was no time for dithering. The longer we waited the greater the risk.

All this time the signal was flashing from the shore. Finally, the major turned without a word, went forrard and told his leading seaman to stand by. In that moment I admired him very much. In cold blood he was going ahead with the job he had to do, and no man can be braver than that. I ordered "Half ahead together," and we began moving in. I took the submarine to within 800 yards of the shore, then gave Wade the order to launch the boat.

As they pulled away I felt I was probably sending them to their deaths, but the die was cast and I had too many other things to worry about now. I manoeuvred the motors until we swung slowly round to port and came to rest roughly parallel with the beach. From that position a half-turn to port would take us immediately into deeper soundings.

The recognition signal was still flashing away, N . . . N . . . and with increasing frequency as the boat drew nearer to the shore. Wade and Blake were up beside me on the bridge, Blake at his post as gunnery officer, looking down over the front of the bridge at the men waiting in silence on the gun platform. I told him to train the gun on the flashing torch and be ready to open fire at the first sign of trouble. The barrel swivelled round until it was pointing out on the starboard beam. I still had my binoculars fixed on the boat, but presently I lost sight of it against the dark reflection of the land.

When the torch stopped flashing, the darkness of the island sprang out blacker and more intense than ever. And then suddenly in the lenses I saw a black dot on the water, emerging from the shadows and moving towards us. It was the boat returning. For a moment I dared to hope that all was well. But then that torch started up again . . . N . . . N . . . N . . . flashing much faster now, moving a little towards the left along the shore, and at once it was as clear as daylight that something was wrong.

Enemy Guns Open Up

In the same instant the silence split asunder and the whole basin of the hill erupted into a crackle of noise and flame. We found ourselves the focal point of a radial cross-fire from four machine guns set in an arc round the lower slopes behind the shore. Fiery streams of tracer stuttered towards us across the water, accelerating swiftly, ricochetting off the sea like molten pebbles, whipping over the periscope standards. Simultaneously, from the emplacement high up on the bluff astern of us, came the sharp boom of a larger-calibre gun, probably a four-inch. Fortunately this gun seemed to have no idea of our range, and its shells went hurtling over our heads. The general shindy, after the long silence, was appalling.

Blake was yelling in my ear. "Open fire, sir?"

"Yes, open fire." We cracked off a shell and saw it burst on the slope of the hill in a muffled shower of sparks. Over. "Down 200. . . . Fire!" The second round landed near the spot where the torch had been flashing. But we were unequally matched for a shooting contest: we could not hope to silence five guns whose exact positions were not easy to pin-point. Already machine-gun bullets were striking the casing of the submarine, and sooner or later we should be having casualties among the gun's crew. There seemed no point in exposing the men if they could serve no useful purpose. So I ordered them to fall out, and sent everybody below except Lieutenant Wade.

One of the machine-guns had shifted its fire to the dinghy, which at this point seemed to be about 400 yards away. Now that I could see the boat clearly with the naked eye, I realized that there was only one man in it. This was disastrous. And it seemed impossible that the one man now rowing with such desperate haste could get through to us without being hit.

I was extremely frightened. It was my first experience of being under machine-gun fire, and instead of acting up to tradition and standing boldly and calmly at the front of the bridge regardless of danger, I sheltered myself as well as I could behind the forrard periscope standard, cocking an eye occasionally to watch the dinghy.

Decided To Face Risk

I was in something of a quandary. I had to think of my duty to the ship. We had run into what was obviously a prepared ambush, and at any moment we might find our retreat cut off by a hidden fleet of submarine-chasers. All my instincts were to dive and get the hell out of it, and I daresay that if I had done so there and then my action would have received official approval. I was responsible for fifty men and a valuable ship; one unlucky hit on the pressure hull from the four-inch gun would be fatal to us. Ought I to continue risking *Storm* for the sake of one man?

The correct answer was undoubtedly no, yet somehow I could not bring myself to desert him while there was a sporting chance. The big gun was still hopelessly out of range, its shells roaring well over our heads with a noise like an express train. I compromised by deciding that I would wait, so long as this gun showed no

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The House of the Seven Flies

by VICTOR CANNING

ILLUSTRATED BY OLIPHANT

With a fortune almost in his grasp, Furse was given two hours to leave Holland. Two hours . . .

EDWARD FURSE was within an ace of laying his hands on a quarter of a million pounds in diamonds. The diamonds had been stolen by Germans from a Dutch bank during a wartime raid. His information was that they lay in a launch at the bottom of the Maas estuary.

He had first learned of them through a man called Sluiter, who was trying to trace them for the bank. Sluiter had died mysteriously on Furse's charter yacht during a trip to Holland. Going through his papers, Furse discovered a map tracing pin-pointing the position of the sunken launch. The tracing bore the words "Seven Flies."

Sluiter had not been working alone. His partner—a girl called Constanta Straatsma who ran a tugboat company—was waiting for the yacht when Furse came into harbour. Furse was immediately attracted by her—but he kept his information to himself. He didn't know enough about her, and he didn't want her to know too much about him.

Inspector Molenaar of the Rotterdam police told Furse that Sluiter had been murdered—by the substitution of over-strong insulin capsules for his normal dose. Someone else was after Sluiter's secret.

Furse soon discovered who it was: Ninus Rohner, a Rotterdam gangster. Rohner offered Furse a partnership in the venture to find the diamonds, and when he refused, had him beaten up in the dockyard. Finding refuge on Constanta's barge, Furse was tempted to take her into his confidence. But he dared not—yet.

The next day, he gave Rohner the slip, and cruised alone in his yacht *Arletta*, searching for a clue to "Seven Flies." And then he found it—an old farmhouse whose ornate wrought-iron gates bore an emblem of seven iron flies.

Deeply excited, Furse laid his plans. He must get in touch with Charlie Ponz—a rogue but a loyal friend, to whom he had entrusted the tracing.

He was just ready to move off, when a big motor launch bore down upon the *Arletta*. Furse recognized the man in it and immediately reached for his pistol. It was Rohner.

PART 4

"I'm On Your Tail"

THE launch swung across his bows and then came slowly abreast, hanging a few yards away from him, the motor throttled down. At the wheel was Pieter, Rohner's strong-arm man. There was no one else. The launch hung there, holding its place and, as Furse watched the two men, part of his mind was telling him that Pieter was no fool at handling a boat. Nothing was said for a while. Rohner, his head bare, the gold-flecked hair tousled boyishly, raised a hand in greeting and then said something over his shoulder to Pieter. The turn of his head brought the rain-polished face into profile.

The launch edged in until it was a yard from the *Arletta's* rail. Furse went forward, a fender in one hand and the Luger in the other.

He said evenly, "If you try and come aboard, I'll use this—and think of some story for the police afterwards."

"I want to talk to you," called Rohner. "You won't need that. Let me come aboard."

Furse shook his head. "You stay where you are. There's nothing you can say to me."

"Please . . ." for a moment Rohner was conciliatory. "You've a right to be angry. I apologize for the way I treated you. I made a mistake about you. Let me come aboard."

Furse hesitated between telling the man to go to hell and letting him come aboard.

"All right," he said brusquely. "But don't try anything funny."

PIETER swung the launch in. For a while the two boats rose and pitched and then, choosing his moment, Rohner jumped aboard the *Arletta*. The *Yssel* at once swung away and went upstream.

Furse, his pistol held ready, backed Rohner to the stern.

"Open your oilskin," he said, and when Rohner did so, he ran his hand over the man's clothes. Rohner was unarmed.

"I never carry them—except in a real emergency," said Rohner pleasantly.

They went below and Furse faced Rohner across the saloon table. His pistol was on the bunk cushion beside him.

Rohner looked around, genuinely interested, and then said: "This is a nice boat. Not like that tub I've hired. You could go anywhere in this."

"Come to the point."

"The point is—a quarter of a million pounds." Rohner was looking straight at him now. "You're ahead of me so far, Mr. Furse, but you can't shake me off. I can wait. You're looking for something up here—something which will put you on to the real thing. Elsa at least learned that from Sluiter. I don't think you've found what you're looking for yet. But you will. When you do, I shall be there—and then we'll talk about a partnership."

"You're going too fast, Rohner. At this moment I'm not even sure I won't go to the police and give them the whole story. That would put you and Elsa in a bad position."

Furse saw the polite smile go from Rohner's face, leaving it cold and predatory. His voice, when he spoke, was harsh and threatening.

"Go to the police and both of us will swear that you were working with us and knew all

"I shouldn't bother to do that, Mr. Furse," M

about it. I've got your signature from the hotel you stayed at in Rotterdam. I can fix up letters from you to me. Molenaar is no fool but his weakness is always being too suspicious."

His words came clear and hard above the noise of the creak and strain of the *Arletta* as she rose and fell. Furse caught the intense, bitter note of a man who knew no scruples.

"I'm a good listener," said Furse, "but I've had enough. You can do what you damned well like, but you don't scare me. Now get off my boat!"

Rohner shrugged his shoulders and went up on deck. Furse followed him. They stood there, the rain beating into their faces while the launch came up towards them.

Before he went over the side, Rohner turned to Furse.

"Think it over," he said, his voice heavy with dislike. "I shall be on your tail. I shan't interfere until the last moment. Then I shall come in. It's up to you what kind of deal we make then—a friendly one or. . . ." He nodded towards the pistol which Furse held.

When Rohner had gone, Furse went below and

lenaar said. Furse looked up. "Why not?" he asked. "Because you won't be staying the night here. I am officially requesting you to leave Holland"

had his breakfast. He shut all speculation from him. The first thing he had to do was to get in touch with Charlie, and—with Rohner about—it was better to do that as far away from this spot as possible. He decided that he would run down to Dordrecht and telephone from there. Here at the Seven Flies it was too dangerous.

In half an hour he was under way, moving down the Overflakkee shore with the west wind strong on his beam.

It took him three hours to make Dordrecht, where he ran into the yacht haven just above the bridge and tied up at the staging by the clubhouse.

He went ashore and telephoned Charlie, but a woman's voice answered him and told him that Charlie was away in Amsterdam. After a little hesitation, she gave him a telephone number, and he eventually got Charlie on the telephone in Amsterdam.

He found that Charlie would not be free of his business in Amsterdam until the next day, and arranged with him that they would meet on the *Arletta* at six o'clock the following evening.

Charlie was full of warnings. "Your friend Molenaar, the policeman, had tea with me the other day," he said.

"I've seen nothing of him since Middelburg."

"You will soon, is my bet."

In Rotterdam, Herman Molenaar was talking to the chief of his department. His chief was a thin, vigorous man with sunken cheeks, a bald head and a shrewd eye for mistakes and uncertainties. He leaned forward across his desk and now and then tapped the sails of the little silver windmill model which formed part of his inkwell. It was a movement which made Molenaar nervous.

"I've had a good man on him. Occasionally he's lost him for a while, but that always happens. Then there's the report from England. All the rest I've handled myself." Molenaar paused, waiting for his chief's reaction.

The man spun the windmill and said: "I wish this rain would stop. It spoils my petunias." Then he leaned back. "The bank is getting anxious about its precious stones, Molenaar. But we mustn't let that worry us, or hurry us, eh, Molenaar? Anxiety is natural to a bank, and worry, of course, is anathema to a policeman."

"Yes, sir." Molenaar was not sure whether his chief was being ironical.

"As far as Sluiter is concerned, I wouldn't say you've got much that helps. There was a woman staying with him in his London hotel, probably Dutch. But she didn't travel over with him. And you can't trace her."

"No, sir."

"Never mind—that's how it often is right up to a few hours before an arrest. Let's see what you have about Furse. The English Customs people suspect he's done some smuggling, but they can't prove it. Over here, we know he has had contact with our friend Charlie Ponz and our elegant Mr. Rohner." He paused and looked up sharply. "But we mustn't forget, Molenaar, that innocent people may have odd friends. We know that Furse has been sailing in the Haringvliet area and that he even changed the name of his boat for a while. Odd, that, but not criminal." He made a long humming note in his throat.

"He might know nothing at all about the bank's stones. That's the trouble. He could go on giving that impression right up to the

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moment when he grabbed them from wherever they are. That would be a bit late, perhaps, for us to do anything. If it happened, the bank's anxiety would become frenzy and there might be departmental changes around here. What do you suggest, Molenaar?"

Molenaar was silent. Then he said slowly: "I want a chance to go over his boat thoroughly. We might find something there . . . something to work on."

His chief stood up and went to the window. "It's something you might have done earlier." Then, after a pause, he went on: "Do you know the Chinese attitude towards doctors, Molenaar?"

"No, sir."

"They pay them to keep them in good health. I think we must become Chinese doctors to the bank and possibly to Mr. Furse." He turned, smiling brightly. "Let's stop things happening before they happen."

IN Dordrecht, Constanta was just leaving a marine engineering works where she had been arranging for the overhaul of her second barge. It was going to cost more than she could reasonably afford, and the barge would be out of commission for a week, which meant the loss of more money. Since her father had died, the fight had been going against her. The end would come unless she could find fresh capital.

On her way back, she crossed the swing-bridge over the mouth of the yacht haven and saw the *Arletta* tied up by the boathouse. Furse, who was on deck, saw her and gave her a hail.

"How's the head?" she called.

"Fine. Come aboard and have a drink."

Constanta shook her head. "Sorry, not now. Why don't you come and have supper with us on the *Zeehond* tonight, if you're free?"

Furse accepted the invitation gladly.

Constanta went back to the *Zeehond,* a suppressed excitement working in her. She found Oom Paul, the captain, and gave him instructions to have the other barge sent up to the yard in the morning. Klara, his wife, was peeling potatoes for supper. Constanta told her she had invited Furse, and then went to her cabin. She stripped off her working-clothes and took a bath.

She dressed slowly, watching herself in the tall strip of glass fastened to the back of the cabin door. She slipped on a yellow dress, knowing the look Klara would give her. It was a colour which, contrasting with her dark hair and brown skin, gave her a richness, not only of looks, but of feeling.

She heard someone drop to the deck above and move aft. When she went back to the living-quarters, Furse was sitting with Klara with a glass of raspberry and schnapps before him.

He got up and came to her. She said something and he replied, but the words meant nothing.

She saw that the cut over his forehead had healed in a thread-fine, dark line.

He had supper with them and played cards for a while afterwards, and he was pleasant and made Klara laugh, and all the time Constanta had the feeling that all his talk was for her, that he knew what was happening inside her.

When he went, she walked with him down the length of the foredeck. The river was a smooth band of silk, sprigged with a little pattern of reflected stars. He turned in the shadow thrown by the dock wall behind him and she heard the faint hiss of his cigarette-end as it dropped into the water behind him. He put out his hands and held her elbows. She felt her body stiffen and tremble and she thought of the times she had been kissed before and told herself swiftly that this was nothing more. Then he pulled her gently to him and kissed her, and in her mind she fought him off, finding a dozen explanations to reduce the moment to the level of others in the past, and losing them and herself as his arms held her and his mouth touched hers again and drove everything from her but a wish for the moment to go on and on. . . .

"Good night, Constanta."

"Good night." Her voice was little more than a whisper.

He went up the ladder quickly and walked away, but it was a long time before she moved and went back to the saloon.

Furse walked round by the main tower with its illuminated clock faces, through the cobbled streets and over the small iron bridges that spanned the canals that ran through the town. He was restless still. As restless as he had been all day. Having to wait for Charlie was an inaction which seemed to overcharge his energies, and make him seek an outlet for his impatience.

He had been glad when Constanta had asked him to the *Zeehond.* But he had found there more than he had anticipated. It was the devil; and he was not sure whether he cared for it. He tried to shake the image of her from his mind. A woman rows out in a boat to meet you and, whether you know it then, it's part of your life coming out to you. You can't escape it. And that was the hell of it, because he had a feeling that this was something which he ought to escape.

The next morning, Constanta came alongside the *Arletta* in her small motor launch. She had to go down to Willemsdorp on business and invited him to take the trip with her. He accepted gladly. He had the whole day on his hands until Charlie arrived. He suggested, after she had finished her business in Willemsdorp, that they should have a picnic lunch and spend the rest of the afternoon together. Constanta agreed readily.

Below Willemsdorp, at the head of the Hollandsche Diep, they swung away under the great iron bridge into a region of lagoons and sandbanks and flat, reed-fringed islands.

Furse kept the launch at open throttle, finding in the speed and the force of the wind against them an exhilaration which matched his excitement.

He watched Constanta as the wind took her dark hair and drew it back, so that the firm line of her temple was shown in an unexpected loftiness that gave a statuesque length and beauty to her face.

"Keep just to port of those stakes," Constanta said. They were going up a narrow channel between two islands. "When you reach the one with the basket on it, swing over towards the wooden jetty."

She could hear the tightness in her voice, and knew what it meant. She put out her hands and took the wheel from him. "Give it to me. This is tricky and I know the way."

He edged over and she slid across to take the wheel.

THEY went in past the jetty and the narrow, reed-choked mouth of an old cut opened up. She took the launch down a lane of water, the reeds bending over them and the feathery seeds shaking down on to their clothes. There was a sudden warm smell of grass and blossom. They were in a great pool whose sloping grass banks came to a thin edge of sand. Beyond the grass was a little stone embankment from behind which old apple trees lifted their heads to watch the water.

They walked through the orchard, across the island to a small cottage where they bought a large white-hearted lettuce to eat with their cheese. Coming back, Furse took her hand and they talked, but not about themselves. For the moment they could only trust themselves with the things around them.

After lunch they lay on the grass. Furse watched her. She was lying with her eyes wide open, staring up at the twisted branches of the apple tree. A leaf had fallen, resting in her hair. Her hand lay on the grass, holding his.

He said: "You haven't any lipstick today."

"You don't like me without it?"

"I like you—any way."

He bent over and kissed her. She gave her mouth to him, and the warmth of her body was against him. He felt the tightening of her fingers in his hair, and under his own hands the awakening in her flesh which passed to his own body. His mouth moved over her throat, taking the softness and warmth of her skin. Then, gently, he put her from him, knowing that the strength to do it came from the intensity of his feeling for her, from a love which he had to break off for her sake.

She lay against the grass, one leg drawn

Continued on page 26

Mills and his wife at a party. His advice to boxers: get into business while the going is good

Freddie Mills fights on in the supertax class

by WILFRED GREATOREX

Not for him the rôle of broken down ring veteran. He's in the money as columnist, restaurateur, film star—and clown

SOME TIME AGO, a thickset husky with a cauliflower ear, a Savile Row suit and a showman's manner climbed into an open-air boxing ring at Southsea to be presented to the crowd. Freddie Mills, licensed boxing promoter, Freeman of the City of London, and former light-heavyweight champion of the world, bowed, bunched his bull's shoulders and was handed a microphone.

Suddenly, his free hand went to his head. He clutched his mane of gipsy hair and began dazedly circling the ring, murmuring (through several loudspeakers): "Bells! Bells! I hear bells!" Ringsiders nudged their neighbours. A few whispered the word "punchy." The crowd hushed in sympathy. Then, as over the silence there came the sound of a peal of bells from a nearby church tower, they roared with laughter.

By such clowning, Frederick Percival Mills progressively enlarges the popularity he won as a fighter and helps to dispel the myth that the gory beatings he took in the ring—and there were several—left him punch-drunk.

When he retired from fighting, after losing his world title and three perfectly sound front teeth against Joey Maxim on January 24, 1950, many thought he had left it too late. "There were plenty ready to say that Freddie was all washed-up," recalls a friend. "They didn't know him. Through all the blood he saw the floodtide that leads on to fortune."

Today, at thirty-three, the ex-champion keeps himself in the supertax class as business man, fight promoter, B.B.C. disc jockey, Chinese restaurant proprietor, and even film star (he stole *Emergency Call*, in the rôle of the man he did not become—a broken-down ring veteran). He also writes a boxing column for newspaper syndication and appears in commercial radio.

An inexhaustible, fidgety humorist of five feet ten in his socks and nearly thirteen stone in his trunks (still only six pounds above his old fighting weight), Mills also finds time to do the rounds of boxing shows, village fêtes, carnivals and charity auctions as a guest celebrity. He enjoys the job. As an auctioneer, he was asked by a wag to take bids for his tie—a typically vivid one—and promptly whipped it off. It fetched £5. Mills turned with a grin towards the smiling charity committee seated formally behind him, and then started discarding his braces and trousers.

Star Turn—In Dartmoor

On another occasion, combining sincere sympathy for the prisoners with a brisk sense of public relations, he turned up at Dartmoor to box the padre. He also reconciled his social conscience and business flair at Bristol when *Emergency Call* was showing there. He was putting on a boxing show in the city at the time. In the film story, he gives a pint of blood to save a child's life. He followed this up by giving a pint in real life—in the cinema foyer.

"Freddie always was mentally superior to most prizefighters," says one famous figure in British boxing. "You've got to be up pretty early to catch him out."

When he was planning his début as a big-time London promoter (after an apprenticeship of three shows in Bristol), Mills went to see Denis Mitchell, general manager of the Empress Hall. "I recalled the Press pictures showing Freddie bleeding and battered after his fights with Baksi, Woodcock, Lesnevitch and Maxim," says Mitchell. "Quite frankly, I assumed he would be 'punchy.'" Mills asked first about ticket distribution. When Mitchell explained that this was mainly handled by agencies, Britain's newest promoter stroked his jutting jaw and worked out by mental arithmetic what this meant in terms of varying numbers of seats at eight different prices. "In a few seconds," Mitchell recalls, "he gave me an accurate estimate of what the agencies would draw as commission on a full house."

Mills himself inclines to laugh off his business reputation. "Money *is* important," he says, "otherwise I wouldn't keep advising boxers to get themselves businesses while the going is good. But I'm more interested in finding some top-class scrappers and in making people laugh than in digging for gold." His aim, he says, is to stay in boxing, as manager or promoter, without having to pay for the privilege.

He left the ring a rich man. From the Maxim affair he salvaged the taxed remains of an £11,000 purse. Twelve earlier fights had yielded him £65,000, some of which went to his manager, Ted Broadribb, now his father-in-law, some to the Exchequer, but none to the spivs, drones and gamblers who batten on successful boxers. Yet, when he lost money on his first Bristol show, his only reaction was to philosophize that "nobody achieved anything without taking a knock or two."

Often called a tiger, and rated both here and in America as one of boxing history's fiercest fighters, Mills rarely gets ruffled. "It's no use losing your wool over anything," he says. "Boxing teaches you that."

Wisecracking In A Crisis

A few months ago he went to meet two boxers, Danny ("Bang Bang") Womber and Gaetan Annaloro, who were flying from France to appear in his first London bill the following night. After half an hour's wait, Mills was told that their aircraft had crashed on take-off. "He didn't turn a hair," says a colleague who was with him at this crisis in his current affairs. "After making sure they were safe, he turned

The knockabout stuff the crowds love. Mills takes a tumble at ice hockey with the Canadians

to me and said, 'They'll be too shaken to fight. Well—now for my boxer's licence. Here starts my comeback!'"

Wherever he goes, Freddie Mills gets a reception that is little short of idolatry. When current and former champions and film and stage stars were presented from the ring at a Solomons show early this year, it was Mills who got the biggest cheer. On such occasions he tucks his jaw into his left shoulder and squares up to the M.C. or the handiest second. "It's corny," says a veteran boxing reporter, "but it always goes over. Only Mills could get away with it. The crowds love him."

For all his schoolboyish behaviour, Mills constantly astonishes boxers, managers, reporters, seconds, referees, police and ringsiders alike with his thoroughness in organization. "Nothing ever gets out of control. He has a finger on everything," says Mike Milligan, his "whip" (boxing's version of a stage manager). Mills not only goes to great pains to make a match but, once a promotion is arranged, keeps almost daily contact with the ticket agencies and Fleet Street's boxing corps (he keeps handy-reference lists of boxing reporters' names in his office, a partitioned-off corner of Joe Bloom's Gymnasium, and in his car). In the seven days before a fight-night, his ticket call-over is an hourly telephone orgy.

"Freddie's Private Army"

Mills always dresses expensively, and turns out immaculately in his promoter's rôle. For his last Bristol enterprise, he packed into the back of his Citroën a pair of highly polished shoes, Palm Beach shirt, white rayon morning shirt, lounge suit and dusk blue evening suit with matching bow. "You might call me 'sartorially impeccable,'" he says with a chuckle.

Before the fighting begins, he makes a point of calling on every boxer, checks seating arrangements, safety precautions and car parks. He never loses touch with a body of invisible men known facetiously by ringsiders as Freddie's Private Army—there to put down ringside betting, which he detests.

The sporting impresario in Mills came out after his London début, when he called on Mitchell with a list of complaints. He had found that two blocks of seats, at each end of the ground floor, had been unsold because they gave a poor vantage-point. "He had the idea of using mobile tiered seating," says Mitchell. "We got it—and the takings went up." Another Mills innovation was a seconds clock showing new arrivals how far a round has gone. He once instructed Milligan to have a spare set of gloves handy by the ring in case those in use were split. "An obvious time-saving precaution," says Milligan. "But in years at the job I've never known it done before."

Mills is as much amused as thrilled by his success as a boxing entrepreneur. On his office door, in capital letters, it says: STRICTLY PRIVATE, but his other concessions to executive rank are not so serious. He often telephones friends and acquaintances in mock American-big-business style: "Hallo, F. P. speaking." Even people he hardly knows become the victims of his leg-pulling.

His "Punch Drunk" Story

Some weeks ago, an ardent young reporter who was interviewing Mills asked him if he ever felt any after-effects from his ring career. "You mean, am I punch-drunk?" said Mills. He winked at Ted Turner, his *aide*, and went on: "Not really. Nothing you'd call serious. I only wake up in the middle of every night screaming: 'Stop it, ref! Stop the fight!'"

There was also the time when Mills, driving through London with Norman Wisdom, the comedian, was pestered by an impatient motorist behind. As the two cars drew up at some traffic lights, the other driver got set to give Mills a mouthful. The ex-champion was looking the other way, towards his passenger, but sensed by Wisdom's expression what was going on. Without moving his head he pulled his hair down over his deep-laid eyes, took out his denture, then turned (exposing his cauliflower ear) and grinned. "The effect," says Wisdom, "was primeval. It would have frightened anybody. The other fellow's face dropped, and he let in his clutch and sped."

Even during his bloodiest moments as a fighter, Mills kept his wit. After he had been down for counts of six, nine, eight and nine against Gus Lesnevitch in 1946, and the referee had stopped the fight to save him further hurt, he was being consoled by his conqueror. "You very nearly had me," said Lesnevitch. "You puffed this eye so badly I couldn't see you."

"See me!" exclaimed Mills. "You could have hit me from memory!"

Freddie Mills did his first fighting against his brother Charlie in the backyard of their home at Bournemouth, where he was born on June 26, 1919. "Sometimes mother made us pack up because the blood sprayed her washing," he recalls now. A shy boy, he kept out of competitions because it meant appearing in public.

One day, however, while going his milk round, he saw a poster advertising a talent show. He entered and won—with three successive knock-outs. There were more fights and more knock-outs, though Mills's early career gave no hint of the glories to come. "He was a real scrapper," says one of his followers of those days, "but he made mistakes that gave him an up-and-down record."

Fairground Toughened Him

Under no illusions himself, Mills set out one day with the object of joining a fairground boxing booth to get tough. He found one at Exeter, was introduced to a towering heavyweight named Gipsy Billy Daniels, and given the job of mixing with the crowd, ready to come forward in case there were no local volunteers. The first time his presence was needed he had to fight Daniels. "I couldn't get near him," Mills relates. "He kept hitting me with terrific rights and, while he wasn't giving me all he had, it hurt. I used more energy picking myself up than in striking him."

Not until wartime did Mills come into the public eye. In 1942, an R.A.F. sergeant, he took the British light-heavyweight title from Len Harvey, then an R.A.F. officer, with a second round knock-out. Peace brought those bloody duels with Lesnevitch, Joe Baksi, Bruce Woodcock and Maxim. From Mills's standpoint the worst of these was the one with Baksi on November 5, 1946. "I was a real Bonfire Night offering," he once said. "Baksi left me in quite a mess."

Yet it was another fight, against Lloyd Marshall the following year, that first set the false rumours going about Freddie's condition. In the fifth round of that immemorable engagement, he was spun round by a punch that landed near the temple. Mills immediately started boxing in the wrong direction. Some months later he was reported suffering from dizziness, headaches and weakness in the legs. A specialist diagnosed misalignment of five vertebrae—but massage cured the fighter so completely that in July, 1948, he went back to win the world championship in an atmosphere of blood, toil and sweat.

Mills's wife, Chrissie, saw none of his fights. But at home at Denmark Hill, London, he still likes to re-live them. He has a film projector and a collection of newsreels covering his major battles, and needs no encouragement to put them on. "He gets as excited as a schoolboy," recalls one guest. "He keeps telling you what's coming next, what punch to look out for."

His zest for life can be trying for Chrissie. He usually goes up the stairs four at a time, wrenching the stair carpet out more often than not. Now and then he indulges in banister-sliding. His buoyancy was almost uncontrollable after his daughter Susan was born this year.

No Wish For A Comeback

Nowadays, the nearest he gets to regular fighting is a daily tussle with his boxer dog, Cammie. But he keeps in trim with regular work-outs in Bloom's gym, where admirers see him tearing into the punch-bag with much of the old rugged violence. For all that, even with some reigning champions older than he is, he feels no overwhelming urge to get back into action as the crowd's fighting hero.

There was a faint echo of the old cheers when he boxed for the Dartmoor prisoners. But there were also boos—an unfamiliar sound to Mills—as he came back from a rub-down after his fight. "What's wrong?" he asked his escort. The official explained: "They don't like you wearing a warder's mackintosh. Don't take any notice. We don't want you to catch cold."

Mills, however, promptly discarded the offending garment. "The customers," he said with a grin, "are always right!" THE END

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an excited bellow. McCormac climbed one, as he had often seen the natives do, and knocked some of the nuts to the ground.

The coconuts were green and a little soft, but they bashed them against the trunks until they split, swallowed the rich, sweet "milk" and sucked the pulpy meat. That night they carried some of the nuts with them and ate them at dawn before they slept.

Towards dawn on the fourth night the gloomy funnel of the road opened into a kampong. They stopped on the edge watching the dark shadows of the huts, then followed McCormac off the road, crawling into a clump of bushes on the fringe of the kampong.

As the light grew they saw it was a big place, and counted more than sixty flimsy thatched huts; about four hundred inhabitants, McCormac guessed. The natives started moving round soon after first light, and it was torment to see the women carrying earthen jars of water and to smell food cooking on the fires.

Refused To Take Risk

Roy's lips were cracked and swollen and he kept doubling up from griping pains, but McCormac would not let them budge. He said stubbornly that they had to see first if any Japs were about. "Even if there aren't," he said, "it would be crazy to walk in in broad daylight. Maybe they're friendly, maybe not."

They waited in anguish all day, and when it was dark McCormac said: "If I'm not back in an hour, beat it." He crawled out of the bushes into the kampong, walked across the hard-packed earth, passing a couple of natives who took no interest in him in the dark, and stopped at the door of a hut he had marked earlier in the day.

Looking inside the doorless frame, he found that it was the village coffee shop and stood for a few seconds taking it all in—the mud floor and bamboo tables where three Indonesians in sarongs and bajus (singlets) sat. There was a kerosene tin of coffee over a small flame, shelves of cheap bottles of "pop" and a little wooden counter. Behind the counter lounged an expressionless, fat Chinese shopkeeper of about fifty.

McCormac walked in, and saw the Indonesians staring at his gaunt, filthy body. Going straight up to the counter, he said to the shopkeeper, *"Manna Joppon?"*

The face of the Chinese did not change. He eyed McCormac for a moment and answered in Malay that there were no Japanese in the village.

McCormac said: "I have no food."

"Where are you from?" the Chinese countered. McCormac pointed vaguely north-west.

"There are others?"

"One is sick with the run-run," McCormac said evasively.

"Wait," said the Chinese, and went out of the door. McCormac waited nervously, and in about three minutes the Chinese came back. Behind him walked an old man with a thin face and a few white hairs on his head.

Headman Was Friendly

McCormac felt a flood of relief as he saw that the old man, apparently the headman of the village, was wearing Queen Wilhelmina's Medal, a silver badge strung on a chain and hanging almost to his navel. It was a sure sign that the village was friendly to whites.

Half an hour later the four of them were lying comfortably on the rushes of a hut. They had drunk jars of water and eaten a terrifically hot curry that left Donaldson gasping for breath and swilling his mouth out with more water.

A young Chinese of about twenty came to see them and introduced himself as Nang Sen. He was brisk and friendly, and had a mouth full of gold teeth which he constantly showed. The Japs had been through the village some weeks previously, he told them, and raped some of the girls. That was one reason for their friendly reception. He chatted a while of other things and suddenly said: "What are you planning to do?"

"Stay away from the Japs," McCormac said. "We wish to find some troops who may be free still."

"I will be driving a lorry south in a few days," Nang Sen said. "You can come with me, and perhaps later you can get to Java, where there may be some white troops."

For two days they did little but rest and eat platters of curried rice, sweet boiled roots and green shoots, and by that time a little healthy flesh was visible on their skinny frames.

"... and the torch!"

A Village Wedding

On the third day they watched, fascinated, a village wedding, which lasted all day. From cockcrow the bride sat in a chair in the middle of the kampong. She could not have been more than fifteen, though she was fully developed, and was dressed in a simple sarong and bead-embroidered baju that covered her shoulders.

All day she sat silently with her head downcast, looking demurely at the ground while her bridegroom sat beside her receiving guests and gifts and chatting volubly. As the sun disappeared he stood up, lifted her gently to her feet, loosened his sarong and wrapped it loosely around both of them. Under its cover she dropped her own sarong to the ground, and they walked together to the hut that had been prepared for them.

A couple of evenings later Nang Sen led them to a battered lorry about twelve years old, with hardly a speck of paint left on it. In the back were tins of petrol and some smelly sheets of raw rubber, which they crawled under. The engine rattled and roared, Nang Sen clashed the gears and the lorry jerked into motion.

The lorry bounced along the road all night, and just before dawn Nang Sen ran it off the road behind some bushes in soft, treeless ground that was virtually a swamp. He gave them a little rice and suggested they also pick some fruit, which was growing freely.

McCormac went foraging and came back with some dark, shiny green leaves picked from what he thought was a cinchona bush, about the size of a rhododendron. He handed them round and said: "Chew them. There's probably quinine in them and we could do with some of that." The leaves were almost unbearably bitter, which seemed to confirm that they contained quinine.

McCormac made them keep chewing, and it was a wise precaution, because mosquitoes were already buzzing out of the swamp. Nang Sen watched their grimaces, gave a golden-toothed grin, and handed them some of his betel nut, wrapped in leaves. They chewed at the nut and the sharp taste made it easier to keep chewing, at the same time, the bitter cinchona leaves.

Before they slept Nang Sen pointed out a little green palm in the jungle; it was only a few feet high, and he beckoned them over to it. The base was soft and swollen and he jabbed a knife into it; a pale greenish liquid bubbled out and he caught some in a tin bowl.

He sipped and offered some to McCormac, and McCormac gingerly sipped and found it was slightly sour but not unpleasant. "Water," Nang Sen said, and added that the palm grew in the more open country, where a man need never die of thirst.

They slept all day and at night rattled again along the road till dawn, when they hid the truck again and slept. They travelled in this way for three more nights, covering hundreds of miles. They passed a couple of Japanese lorries without challenge, and jolted along the road without talking much, feeling reasonably relaxed, conscious of an air of unreality about it all but accepting it without question.

One morning Nang Sen slowed and steered the lorry off the road behind some trees and into a sort of ditch. He got out and they trailed after him through rubber trees for half an hour till they came to a kampong and followed him into a hut.

Inside was a plump Chinese woman who, Nang Sen said, was his sister. She eyed the four ragged strangers without any emotion. Then she smiled and good-humouredly began to curse them in Malay for being so filthy. First she pushed them outside to wash in a rain tub, then dressed their sores and handed them thin cotton trousers and short smocks in the Chinese style.

For two days they rested, sleeping in rope beds and sniffing the incense from joss sticks burning beside a little Buddha in a dark corner of the hut. It was, as Donaldson said, "a damn sight better than smelling ourselves."

Journey By Sampan

About four o'clock one morning Nang Sen's sister woke them, and they followed her through more rubber trees till at first light they came out to the edge of a wide river. A little sampan was moored there and, prodded by the Chinese woman, they clambered in and she poled them briskly out into the stream.

As they rounded a bend in the river, McCormac caught sight of a native town, some buildings looming sturdily in the centre over sprawling acres of atap and bamboo huts. The Chinese woman nodded at it and said, "Palembang."

The sampan glided by the bones of some bombed and burnt-out wrecks poking forlornly above the water, and the Chinese woman steered it on to the mud at the far side. Almost wordlessly they trailed after her through some secondary jungle and came to a railway line and a goods train of low trucks covered with tarpaulins.

She told them to climb under the tarpaulin, hide under the sheets of rubber inside, and wait. "Friends come," she said, and turned and walked off.

The four men lay for an hour under the rubber, with doubts starting to nibble at their minds. Jabbering voices sounded along the track. A louder voice, obviously Japanese, started shouting and, to McCormac's horror, bodies started scrambling into the trucks.

The Fellow Fugitives

The four lay in silent fright under the rubber while bodies settled themselves around them and continued jabbering. Mercifully the Japanese voice did not seem to be among them. A little later the trucks abruptly jerked and with a rattling and clanking of buffers started to move.

For another half-hour the four lay sweating under the rubber, wondering fearfully what was going to happen. Suddenly someone pulled the rubber sheeting aside, and they blinked up tensely at some Javanese grinning down at them.

One of the Javanese said: "You can sit up now. It is safe." Grinning natives handed them each a cigarette and a small parcel of rice cakes wrapped in leaves.

"How did you know we were here?" McCormac asked after a while, and one of the Javanese said simply, "We were told."

"Who told you?" McCormac asked. The Javanese said with a polite smile: "It is not wise to know all." He added that smuggling aboard trains was the method the natives used to avoid being conscripted for labour by the Japanese.

The trucks rattled along all day, passing through kampongs, jungle and secondary jungle, and the men in the truck slept some of the time on the soft rubber.

Just before dusk the Javanese woke them. The train was panting up a long rise and the speed was dropping off. The little Javanese who did most of the talking said they must jump off the train there; he pointed across the jungle and said they must find their way to Oosthaven.

One by one the four swung their legs over the side of the trucks, dropped lightly to the earth, and ran crouching into the bushes. It was secondary jungle, thick, long grass and bushes and the occasional rubber tree. Together again, they ran, still crouching, till they were well away from the railway. That night they made another nest for sleeping.

Washed In Stream

In the morning they trekked across scrubby country. Water was no longer a problem. A lot of the small palms that Nang Sen had shown them were scattered over the country, and when they jabbed a knife in the swollen base the sour, thin liquid gushed out and was good to drink. Farther on a rather muddy stream meandered through the scrub. Here they washed, relaxed for a few hours, and then moved on.

Roy was still weak and very thin, but McCormac, Donaldson and Skinny were beginning to feel fit again. Mostly they walked stripped to the waist when the undergrowth was not too high, and all of them were burned a deep grimy brown, so that from a distance they could pass as natives.

McCormac said, however, that their blue eyes would give them away. "We could pass as Eurasians, though," he added. "They can have blue eyes, and if we say we used to work for the Dutch Company"—as the Netherlands East Indies Government was called by the natives—"we ought to get away with it all right."

Their hopes began to rise. They were not free yet, but their long and unmolested journey through Sumatra had put new courage into them.

NEXT WEEK: On the run with a band of guerrilla fighters in Java

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his eye
His bike is his dearest possession;
he takes pride in its efficiency
and immaculate appearance, he
knows that with the approach of
the winter months and darker nights,
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THERE'S A BRANCH IN EVERY LARGE TOWN

THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN FLIES

Continued from page 20

up, bare and brown, her head thrown back, her eyes shut, her arms thrown out so that the thrust of her shoulders against the earth offered the fullness of her breasts to him.

He put his arms around her and held her gently to him. And in that moment he loved her and knew, with bitterness, that he could not take her love. He could imagine so well what her attitude to him would be if she knew the full truth about him.

Constanta looked up at him and smiled. For a moment she wanted to ask him what was wrong. Then, with an instinctive wisdom, she realized that she must wait for him. Sooner or later the love between them would impel his trouble into the open. There was an extraordinary sweetness in her smile that tore Furse's heart.

CHARLIE was sitting in the cabin waiting for him. For once, his linen suit was pressed and neat, and he had the air of an eager schoolboy poised on the edge of a treat. A cigarette was waved awkwardly in a broad, fat hand and he said almost reproachfully:

"It is an hour, sir, that I wait for you. Luckily, I have thoughts to think, so the time is not wasted."

"Sorry, Charlie, but I've been out for the day."

"With a girl, no?"

"Who told you?"

"The yacht-club boatman. He saw you go off with her this morning. But that is your business. Here——" Charlie tossed an envelope across to him. "For once I feel good, sir. Damn me, you tell me why I don't ever look inside that thing?"

Furse smiled as he poured out some drinks, letting the envelope lie on the table for a while.

"Maybe you knew, Charlie, that it wouldn't help you."

"Maybe. But now you tell me all about it?"

"Yes—but first I've got to make sure."

Furse got up and reached for the Chart 192 from the rack. He spread it on the table and pinned it flat. The sight of the chart raised excitement in him. This was why he was in Holland—for this alone. Nothing else mattered. Nothing else must get in the way.

Charlie glanced at the open hatch door and rose.

"You don't want visitors just now." He bolted the hatch. Sitting down, he put a revolver on the bunk cushion at his side. "There is money in this? A lot of money?"

"Yes."

"Good. Then we keep our insurance policy close to hand."

Furse opened the envelope and took out the overlay. With his pencil, he carefully marked in the position of the House of the Seven Flies on Krabbensplaat. He could do it accurately, for while he had been anchored up there he had taken a couple of cross-bearings, using the cable beacon at Stadsehoek and the end of Middelharnis jetty as reference points. He put the overlay on the chart so that the cross marked "Zeven Vliegen" fell on the position of the house. Slowly he moved the overlay with the house as the centre of a circle.

The other two crosses were fixes which he guessed must be marked on the chart. He found them easily. One was the church at Middelharnis and the other the church at Goudswaard on the other side of the river. The little dotted circle fell to the south-east of the island, just off shore and a little below the point where the mouth of the cut ran up to the house.

He made a pencil mark in the centre of the circle through the overlay on to the chart. Charlie watched him over his shoulder.

"Just there," said Furse, as he straightened up and indicated the slight pencil mark on the chart, "is nearly a quarter of a million pounds worth of stones waiting to be picked up. They're in a steel deed box in the cabin of a smallish motor launch which sank there one night in November, 1944. All we have to do is to pick them up and get rid of them quietly. From what I know of the place, the launch can't be lying in more than two fathoms. That means at low tide I could just strip and do the job myself. Maybe, if there's a lot of sand silted into the launch, we'll have to have a diving suit. Could you arrange that?"

Charlie did not say anything for a moment. He puffed awkwardly at his cigarette, his face owlish with thought. Then he picked up the overlay and put a match to it. He held it in his fingers until it had burned away.

"We don't want this now, but to keep it would put temptation in the way of a man like Rohner, say. For a quarter of a million I can arrange anything. These stones are uncut?"

"Mostly."

"That makes it easier. But in placing them we shall lose on it. Half that amount. Even so, it is enough to make a kind of weakness in the stomach when thinking about it. Maybe I like another drink."

Furse gave him a drink. Charlie went on:

"You sure this is one thing you want to do? A little smuggling . . . these days that is forgivable and a man don't have no trouble with his conscience. For me, with this, I don't have no conscience. That is something I lose when my voice breaks. But how about you?"

Furse shrugged his shoulders. "Don't worry about me."

"O.K. But I have to ask that question. Once I use you without saying anything. That was wrong and I have a bad feeling, sir. Now—I don't want no more bad feelings. We go in and we go through. Now you tell me all about it."

"All right. Here goes."

Furse told him the whole story from the moment Sluiter had come aboard the *Arletta*. He went on: "Sluiter discovered that Maserling, the German officer who led the raid on the bank, had been made a prisoner-of-war at the beginning of 1945. He was sent to a camp in England, where he died of pneumonia. Sluiter also discovered that Maserling had made friends with a farmer in the district, had almost become one of the family, and that they still had papers belonging to him. Among the papers was the chart and the overlay and a letter written to a friend in Germany, but never posted, telling him the full story of the treasure, except the location of the Seven Flies, and asking for his help in what he referred to as 'the Haringvliet project' when he was repatriated.

"I destroyed everything except the overlay. But although Sluiter was a careful man, Elsa, Rohner's girl friend, must have guessed he had found what he wanted. She wanted it, too—but at the last moment she must have been clumsy and scared him, and he left her. He was unlucky, because she had already done the first part of her job—tampered with his insulin supplies. It's not going to be easy to bring this off without interference from Rohner."

"I can handle him. That is for me. But there is one thing I still don't understand. What about this girl Constanta Straatsma who comes out to meet Sluiter when you get to Veere?"

FURSE stood up. "I don't know," he said a little harshly. "She says Sluiter was inquiring about spare marine engine parts for her in England. Molenaar said the same. It could be true. There doesn't seem any other way she could fit in. . . ."

"She is the girl you were with today?"

"Yes."

"You like her?"

Furse turned quickly.

"What the hell are you getting at, Charlie?"

Charlie made a pacifying motion with his hand and smiled—a sad, tender smile. "All right—you don't have to bite my head off. Can I help it if I am so full of friendliness to you that I take an interest? You spend a day with her, sir. You come back aboard here with a quarter of a million pounds practically in your pocket, but in your eyes is something else. I don't like to do business with a man who might give

"What did you wish to punch him on the nose *about*?"

up the chance of so much money for a good woman."

"I'm not giving up any money."

"Good. When you see her again?"

"Not again. It was a day's outing and it's over. What the hell is this, Charlie?"

"Nothing. I just like to know."

They both laughed, and then Charlie went on:

"Now we make a plan. I stay with you tonight, and tomorrow we go up and take a look at this place. First thing we must find out is, can you do it alone or do we need a diving outfit."

After supper, Charlie went off to do some telephoning. Furse sat on deck, smoking. It was a windless, balmy evening and there was a great peace over the yacht haven. He had an absurd desire to get up and go along to the *Zeehond*, an illogical need to see and be near Constanta again. At all costs he had to avoid that.

Up there in the Haringvliet, the tide was sluicing at this moment over a quarter of a million pounds worth of stones. No woman was worth a quarter of a million.

It was just after midday when Rohner overtook them. They were heeling over to a steady east breeze and running down from Willemstad towards the low point of Tien Gemeten.

A motor launch came up behind them with a tidy little moustache of white froth at its bows.

"Visitors," said Charlie, who was watching it through the glasses. "I don't give no prizes for guessing who it is."

The *Yssel* came up with them and for a while throttled down to run abreast. They looked a pleasant enough party, Furse thought. Rohner, in a yachting cap, blue blazer and white flannels, was sitting in a cane chair on the forward deck. Elsa sat beside him, her hair blowing in the wind, wearing a white sweater and pale blue linen trousers. On the deck at Rohner's feet lay Pieter, the strong-arm man, stripped to a pair of tights. At the wheel was Anselm Dekker, Rohner's tout. He looked miserable and out of place.

Rohner raised a hand and waved to them and across the five yards of water called: "We're going into Hellevoetsluis for the night. If you get that far, come aboard and have a drink. I'll open up a special bottle for you."

"What of? Poison?" Furse shouted.

Elsa smiled, and Furse saw the quick gleam of Rohner's teeth. He turned and said something to Dekker, and the cruiser opened up and passed them.

Furse stood the *Arletta* over towards the Vuile Gat until the cruiser was out of sight. Then he put down the helm and ran before the wind, westwards, along the bottom of Tien Gemeten and out into the Haringvliet.

They ran along in the lee of Tien Gemeten and then there was Krabbensplaat coming up over their starboard bow. Furse eased the sail on the *Arletta* and they went quietly down on the tide which had just started to ebb.

"Take the wheel," he said to Charlie, "and keep her as she's going." He went below and got the lead.

Fifty yards below the mouth of the cut, he began to take soundings, and kept going until they were well beyond the cut. There were between three and three and a half fathoms all the way. With the tide only just beginning to ebb, that meant that at low water there would be between eleven and fourteen feet of water. Giving the sunken launch a five-foot clearance above the bed of the river, that meant there would be, at the most, little more than nine feet of water to dive through, and, at the best, six. It would be easy.

He sat down by Charlie at the wheel.

"It's a job for low tide. It's four o'clock now and the tide's going. That means dead low about ten tonight. We could come out in the dinghy."

"No. We can't get rid of Rohner so easily." Charlie was smoking his cigar and watching the cruiser in the distance. "You listen to me, sir. This is how we do it. We go into Hellevoetsluis tonight and keep Rohner happy. I'll phone Mama to come and join us" —all Charlie's lady-loves were called "Mama"—"and she comes aboard seen by no one. Tomorrow we go out and Mama wears some clothes of yours. She has the build. As soon as Rohner comes past us and gets ahead we slip you and the dinghy off astern and you go away and work all day locating the wreck. Mama and I will sail on."

Charlie paused thoughtfully. "Whenever Rohner comes too near, she can go below. In the evening you run the dinghy into Middleharnis and come over on the ferry and walk aboard. Next morning you go off early on the ferry. I lie on deck and the *Arletta* never goes out. Rohner won't know what to do. If you can't pick the stuff up in two days, sir, well, damn me, then we have to have a diving outfit and think of something else."

"It sounds all right. But we'll have to work it out carefully."

"This is a problem for minds like ours. To sail the *Arletta* is easy. To dive for the stones—that I don't do since I can't swim."

They were in Hellevoetsluis by five o'clock. Rohner had gone through the lock and tied up in the Voorne canal. Furse came alongside the baulks of timber outside the lock and made fast as Charlie put the fenders out. He was stowing the mainsail while Charlie squared up the gear on deck when a voice called to him from the quayside.

"I shouldn't bother to do that, Mr. Furse."

He looked up and saw Molenaar standing there. Just behind him were two men in the uniform of the Dutch Customs service.

Molenaar dropped on to the deck and, as Charlie came aft, gave him a friendly nod.

Charlie looked from Molenaar to the two Customs men. "When people like

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you look so happy, I don't feel good."

Furse said slowly, "Why not?"

"Because you won't be staying the night here. I am officially requesting you to leave Holland."

Furse said coldly: "Would you mind telling me why I'm not going to be allowed to stay the night here?"

Molenaar rubbed the nails of his right hand on his jacket lapel and answered quietly, "Maybe we should go below where we can talk privately. Charlie had better come, too, because this matter concerns him."

Molenaar stood waiting for them to move, a bulky, well-dressed figure in his brown suit and perfectly knotted bow-tie. For a moment Furse felt a touch of anxiety; then, his mind racing over the past few days, he could find no cause for worry. He went across to the companion-way and swung himself down into the cabin.

"Let's have it," he said.

"You two are up to something, and I have sufficient regard for both of you not to want to be forced to deal with you *after* a crime has been committed."

Furse said sharply, "I'm a yachtsman who happened to bring a dead body into the country and I've been told not to leave until the police give me permission. I don't see how I've qualified for this."

"No? Then I will tell you, Mr. Furse. I have had a report on you from the English authorities. There is no actionable evidence against you, but there is ample reason to suppose that for some time you have been smuggling goods into England."

"He accuses us of smuggling!" Charlie rolled his eyes.

MOLENAAR ignored Charlie and went on: "The water tank on this boat has a false compartment. I discovered it the morning you went off with Miss Straatsma. You also have on board a Luger pistol for which you hold no licence either from us or the English police. Your only contacts in Holland are—pardon me, Charlie—undesirable: Charlie, here, and Mr. Rohner and his friends. I am not going to be so simple as to ask you to explain all this. I am informing you—officially—that the Netherlands Government are of the opinion that they don't want you in this country."

"You can tell the Netherlands Government that I refuse to leave!" Furse said quickly.

"In that case a telephone call will bring an official expulsion order. But I think you will not want me to go as far as that. For your own good you will be leaving this country within the next two hours. There is a good weather report for the North Sea crossing. You have time to fill up with water, petrol and supplies. Until you leave you will have two Customs officers aboard and, when you leave, a Customs launch will escort you to the mouth of the river."

"And what about me?" asked Charlie.

"You stay here, Charlie. We should hate you to leave the country, because we want you here against the time when we shall catch up on you."

Furse lit a cigarette and then went and sat on the companion-way steps.

"You know . . ." he frowned at Molenaar, "it seems to me that for once the police are getting out of their depth. Here we are, according to you, a couple of smugglers, and you warn us off—just at the moment when you've learned about my water tank and could tip off the English Customs. Somehow, that doesn't seem the moment to hold back. There's some other reason. Why aren't you frank with me?"

Molenaar drummed his fingers on the table for a while, thinking. Even now, he was not certain. Furse was quite right, of course. The smuggling was an excuse.

"No, I haven't been frank with you. But, then, you haven't been frank with me, Mr. Furse."

"You're worrying about Sluiter still?"

"Yes. I am worrying about him."

"You think I had something to do with his death?"

"No. If I did, I should not send you back to England. But I am worrying that you know more than you have told me about Sluiter—and particularly about his mission in England. If you do"—Molenaar stood up as he spoke—"then get this quite clear. I'm kicking you out of the Netherlands because I don't intend that you shall get your hands on a lot of easy money. It's the only way open to me."

"What is all this easy money you're talking about?" Furse said it naturally, with just that edge of puzzled curiosity in his voice that was needed, but he felt the rising stir of anger and frustration in himself. Suddenly, everything had blown up in his face.

"If you don't understand what I'm talking about," said Molenaar, "then it doesn't matter."

"We don't understand you," said Charlie. "But O.K. Mr. Furse is to go—and that's that."

"You can get your things together, Charlie, and leave now," said Molenaar, moving towards the companion way. "Two hours, Mr. Furse. You can go ashore, do anything you like as far as stores are concerned, but I'm sure you won't mind if I insist that a Customs man goes with you."

Charlie went forward to get his bag while Furse went up on deck with Molenaar. They stood there waiting for Charlie and neither of them spoke.

Charlie came up on deck, his case in his hand. He looked ruffled and bad-tempered, like a battered old crow, but there was a bright glint in his eyes.

"What a country, damn me. Why don't you send me away, too? It would be a pleasure. A man tries to keep his nose clean and somebody accuses him of stealing handkerchiefs. Captain, sir, you don't let this lose you your sleep or appetite." He put a hand on Furse's arm. "I don't take my smoked eel. You finish him tonight."

"Come on, Charlie." Molenaar moved impatiently.

"O.K."

"Goodbye, Charlie," said Furse. "See you in some other country, sometime."

He watched them move across the quay and then one of the Customs men came aboard and settled himself in the stern, where he began to fill a pipe.

Two hours was more than enough. He had filled his water and petrol tanks at Dordrecht that morning before leaving, and for food he had plenty of corned beef and biscuits. The Customs man helped him to haul his dinghy aboard and lash it securely.

A little while before he was ready to sail, Rohner and Elsa came strolling down the quay. They stood watching him while he bent a storm jib to take the place of the summer canvas he had been carrying in the rivers. Rohner came over to the quay edge.

"You've created a sensation, Mr. Furse. Everyone knows you're being sent back. Bad luck."

The Customs man came along the deck and gave Rohner a frown. "It is forbidden to speak to the English captain. You will go, please."

"Don't worry," said Furse. "I don't

THE HUMAN MACHINE

True worth

"ALL men are equal," said a cynic," but some are more equal than others." Maybe: but all men and women are human beings, and we'd all get on much better if we didn't sometimes forget it.

People used to talk about "the dignity of labour." It's a pity they don't still. Any job well done is worthy of respect, and the aristocrat is the person who is doing his job well. That, and that alone, is the basis of true equality.

by ROFFE THOMPSON

"Over your dead body? That could be arranged!"

want to speak to him." He turned his back on Rohner and heard Elsa's light laugh.

It wanted half an hour to eight o'clock when he took the *Arletta* out. The Customs man stayed aboard. A Customs launch which had been lying in the tramway harbour now preceded the *Arletta* out into the river.

Under the light beacon at the entrance to the harbour, Furse saw Molenaar and Charlie standing. Molenaar raised a hand in a statuesque, vaguely antique farewell, and Furse smiled to himself as he imagined the triumph which the man was feeling. Charlie, alongside Molenaar, gave an expressive hunch of his shoulders and flapped his arms helplessly.

Outside, the tide was sluicing strongly seawards and, as Furse put the helm over to run with it, he saw a barge coming up from the direction of Tien Gemeten. The yellow and black paint of the deckhouse was familiar and, picking up his glasses, he focused on the craft.

Almost at once he had Constanta in view. She was standing on the port bow, swaying a little to the run of the barge, her hands in her pockets and a red scarf flying from her neck. He put the glasses down quickly.

"Take the wheel," he said to the Customs man. "I'll get some sail on her."

He went forward, but Constanta's face was clear in his mind, a long, beautiful oval, the soft brilliance of her half-parted lips and the dark depths of her eyes. . . . He swore to himself and pushed the image from him as he ran up the jib.

He was going back to England, back to his son Jimmy, and the unpleasant certainty that there would be no more easy money from Charlie in Holland. What the hell was he to do? Charter parties couldn't keep a boy at a public school and a man in cigarettes and whisky. The only thing he could do was to sell the *Arletta* and go cap-in-hand to some friend and cadge for a nine-till-six job.

At the wheel, he looked up and saw the burgee standing out stiff and brave, and there was a ring of tidy white curls around the bare sandbanks. The swift, bubbling call of sandpipers suddenly swept down on him with the wind, and somehow he knew that the moment he lost the *Arletta* he would have lost himself.

The Customs man lit a pipe, sitting alongside him, and said: "She is a good boat. By midday tomorrow you will be home."

"Yes." He was in no mood for talking.

Above Hellevoetsluis, the launch swung over to the Goeree side of the river and stayed with him, leading the way through the buoyed channel of the Slijkgat until he was over the Hinder Bank and at sea about twelve miles from Hellevoetsluis.

It was ten o'clock, almost dark and dead low tide, when the Customs launch came alongside. There was hardly any sea running and the man from the *Arletta* was taken aboard the launch easily.

Five minutes later, the lights of the launch were fading into the east and Furse was alone. He kept on his course until the lights were gone, and then hove-to.

He lit a cigarette and sat with his arm crooked over the wheel. The *Arletta* was riding easily, her gear complaining gently as now and again she fell away from the wind and then came swinging back. Sea and sky had merged into an uneven darkness. Overhead, a few uncertain stars pricked through the shabby blackness like light through a worn carbon sheet.

Well, he told himself, this is it. Somewhere in the Haringvliet were the stones, and that was where they would go on lying for a long time. It was a situation he could not accept. If only . . . if only he could get back and lift the stuff himself. It was a project full of risks. Just thinking about it raised a quick pulse of excitement in him. But how the hell could a man do it? He was due in England the following evening. Molenaar would check on his arrival—but until then no one would know where he was.

If he slipped back with the tide tonight and lay up in the pool at Krabbensplaat he would have the following day to make a bid for the stones. If he were lucky he could come out on the tide that night. . . . After that, he could make for Ostend or some other port and find a place to hide them and then take his own time before he went across. . . . He had only been asked to leave Holland. There was no law against his loitering down the Channel coast.

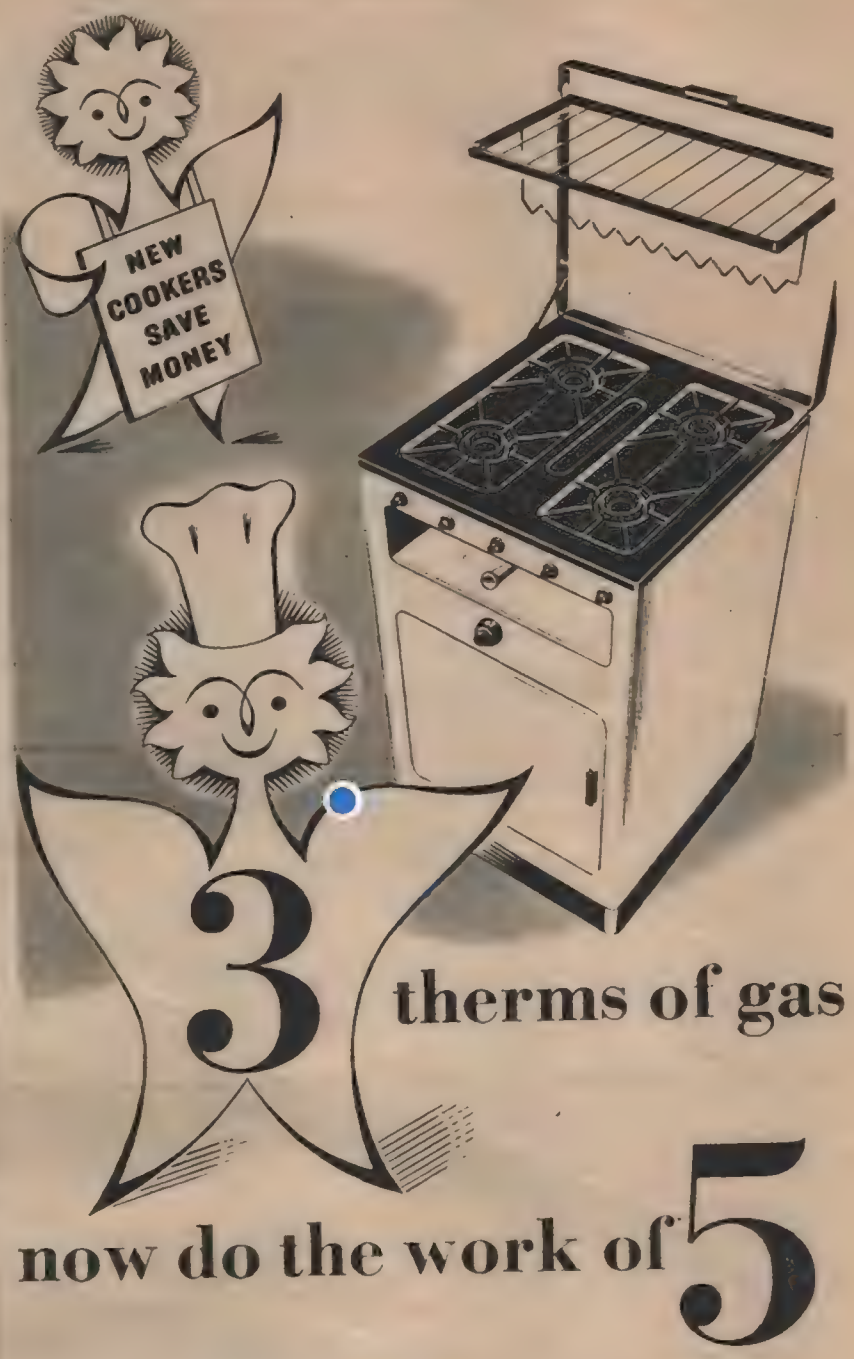
For a while he played with the idea. The trouble was, he could never do it alone. He needed Charlie. . . .

He went below to get himself some supper. Coffee and smoked eel, he decided. He went to the galley and got down the tin in which Charlie had put the eel. As he opened the lid, he saw that there was a sheet of notepaper on top of the brown coil of eel. He took it under the cabin lamp and read it.

Captain, sir. Take the biggest risk when they least expect it. Tonight I stay in Ferry Hotel, Hellevoetsluis. Come back on tide. Ring me morning from Krabbensplaat. You can do it—with me.

It was all he needed. Charlie had taken the opportunity which had been denied to him. There was a telephone at the House of the Seven Flies. That he had learned from Beukleman. He reached up and got his charts and the *North Sea Pilot, Part IV*. Going in at night without lights would not be easy, particularly as he was not too familiar with the channels. It would be simple to go wrong and find himself aground. There was one consolation, however. He would be going in on a rising tide.

His one danger was being caught. If



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Molenaar got hold of him, the man's temper would change. He could tell the truth but that would mean explaining about Rohner, and he had not forgotten Rohner's threat to implicate him. Even without that there would be plenty of trouble. But against all this, there was a rising confidence in him. With Charlie and a bit of luck it could be done.

He went up and doused his navigation lights.

IN Hellevoetsluis, Constanta and Klara were sitting outside the wheelhouse. It was a warm night. Klara was knitting and Constanta lay back in her deckchair, her hands behind her head, watching the pale-winged moths that fluttered about the light bulb over the door. Now and again Klara looked across at her curiously. She knew Constanta well enough to realize that the girl was worrying about something, and she had a shrewd idea that it was nothing to do with her business.

It was an hour since Molenaar had left Constanta. He had seen her barge come in and had been waiting for her. He had told her the action he had taken with Furse, and Constanta had been careful to keep back any expression of her own feelings. It would have served no purpose to tell him that she had deliberately altered her barge schedule to follow Furse to Hellevoetsluis. Her reason for doing so was that, since her outing with him, she had come to the decision that the thing which was holding them apart was the fact that Furse was trying to take the bank's stones.

In her own mind she kept to the word "take" rather than "steal." An idea had grown in her that if she could see him again and talk to him about it, tell him the truth about her own relationship with Sluiter, he might be honest with her and she might be able to persuade him to drop a project to which, some instinct told her, he was not entirely committed in his heart.

"I think," she said suddenly, "that I will have a letter from him soon."

Klara did not ask her of whom she was speaking. She knew.

"He is a man to forget," she said severely, her needles bickering gently, and there was an angry tenderness in her voice.

"I don't want to forget him." From a child, Klara had known that stubborn note in Constanta's voice.

Constanta got up and went on to the quay. Klara, she felt, would only end by annoying her from the best of motives.

She walked slowly in the direction of the town. The man had kissed her, wanted to feel as she had felt, and then, abruptly, everything had collapsed between them. And she knew why. The other thing held him back. It was her sureness of this which gave her hope. She could not mistrust a man whose behaviour towards her had been so controlled by decency.

Because she had no desire to go back and have to talk to Klara and Oom Paul, she turned into the Ferry Hotel to dine by herself. Her thoughts and speculations about Furse were all the company she needed at this moment. She had been sitting at her table for some time before she realized that Charlie Ponz was also in the room. He was eating at a table near the window. Molenaar had pointed him out to her and told her of his association with Furse.

Charlie was eating an omelet and drinking *aquavit*. In imagination he was out off the Hinder Bank now with Furse. A quarter of a million pounds, less expenses. Damn me—for that amount of money a man should do a little thinking, take a few risks. All Furse would need was the right touch. He sat back, lit himself a cigarette and offered up a prayer that the note he had left in the smoked eel box would come to his notice. The damned fool might be quite likely to go without supper.

He paid his bill and went across to Constanta. He had seen her the moment she had entered the room. He stood smiling by her table.

"Good evening, Miss. Captain Furse gave me his kind regards for you before he left. It is a pity the police make such a big mistake with his reputation. For me, I think he could start a libel action, or maybe I mean slander." He pulled a card from his breast pocket and dropped it on the table. "Ever you want something in Rotterdam, that's me. Cheap nylons, coffee, some business rival fixed, a quick passage somewhere without passport—you just look me up." The smile broadened and one eye flickered gently in a wink. "Now, I must get back to Rotterdam."

"Thank you," said Constanta, picking up the card. She found herself liking this bright little man, and she was tempted to hold him, to talk to him about Furse. But all she said was: "I'll bear it in mind if I want someone fixed," and smiled.

On Rohner's launch, both Dekker and Pieter were asleep forward. Rohner and Elsa were sitting in the stern under a canvas canopy with scalloped edges. On the table between them were glasses, cigarettes and a bottle of gin. They were arguing, both keeping their voices low, like parents afraid of waking the children, both trying to force the other to a decision. Both of them knew that their only hope now lay in Charlie and persuading him to work with them. Their difference of opinion lay in deciding whether they should go to Charlie or wait until he came to them. To neither of them did it occur that Charlie might not want their help.

MOLENAAR was having supper with the captain of the Customs patrol cutter. Molenaar had no feeling for the sea and no enthusiasm for ships, and the prospect of a night patrolling the mouth of the river was unattractive.

Furse had gone, but Molenaar's suspicions of the man remained. You can kick a man out of a country, but that is no guarantee that he will not try to come back if the incentive is strong enough. A quarter of a million pounds was enough incentive for any man.

The captain, seeing that he was eating little, said: "You need not be afraid to make a good supper. It will not be rough tonight—and, even if it should be, it is always better to have a good cargo aboard so that you have something to jettison. You think this man will try to come back?"

"I don't know. We can only wait and see. If he does and we get him—then life is going to be uncomfortable for him."

"So. Then in an hour we leave. If he comes, he will take the tide."

To be continued next week

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

THE DRESS I wore for this picture, taken just before my sixth birthday, partly caused a minor riot in our household. My younger sister and brother had dresses made of the same mauvey-pink material. While we girls admired ourselves in a mirror, poor old John, then aged two, put up a kicking and screaming resistance. Never again did mother insult his budding manhood by trying to dress him like his sisters.

Not that I worried much about the younger ones. I'm afraid I was a bossy elder sister. Sometimes I'd bully John and my long-suffering sister, Hazel, into cooking for me on the roof. While I lolled under a huge golfing umbrella, my "slaves" would peel potatoes and kindle fires in a valley formed by two adjoining rooftops. How we failed to set the house on fire I shall never know.

When I was nine we moved to Edgbaston, Birmingham; I attended the Church of England College, where I caused a certain amount of trouble. I used to steal stationery, among other crimes. I had a passion for the smell and feel of freshly unpacked notebooks, writing paper and envelopes. These I would take away into corners and gloat over like a miser.

My worst childhood memories are of visits to the theatre. Although I would think nothing of inflicting my singing and dancing and nauseating little fairy acts on our long-suffering friends and relatives, being taken to a pantomime would make me sick. The idea of a theatre packed with strange people frightened and repelled me.

Despite this unfortunate kink, it never occurred to me that I wanted to do anything other than go on the stage. So when, at seventeen, I was offered a job at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, I accepted without hesitation. A few years later I was working with the Old Vic and had signed my first contract to appear in films.

Today she is a leading actress. For her name, see page 35

ONE OF OUR SUBMARINES

Continued from page 17

signs of finding our range. Meanwhile, the dinghy was coming on at a maddeningly slow speed. When it was about one hundred yards away, I recognized the rower as the major, and then suddenly saw the leading seaman in the water, hanging on to the stern of the boat and swimming with his free arm.

Wade and I were now wildly agitated; it was like the last lap of a neck-and-neck race, but a hundred times more exciting. We yelled crazy words of encouragement which they could not possibly hear above the din. I even urged the major to get out and swim, though what good that would have done I cannot now imagine.

Ran The Gauntlet

At last the incredible was coming true. They had run the gauntlet. They were within a few yards of us, and the major was turning his head to choose the best place for coming alongside. I sent Wade down on to the fore-casing to give them a hand up, and in a few moments they were scrambling over the ballast tank and up on to the casing. "Get them up to the bridge," I shouted. "Don't worry about the boat."

The major and the leading seaman were completely done in. Retching and groaning, they struggled through the little door at the front of the bridge, staggered past me and somehow got themselves into the hatch and down the ladder.

I ordered Wade to follow them. He had been splendid.

"Control room! DIVE, DIVE, DIVE!"

As I pulled the hatch down over my head, I could still hear the four-inch shells screaming overhead and the bullets whining and pinging all round us. Landing hurriedly on the control-room deck I ordered "Thirty-two feet" and told Blake to switch on the echo-sounder, for I was not sure how much water we had below us. As the machine recorded the increasing depth, so we went gradually deeper, too, keeping about twenty feet between us and the sea's bottom.

What now? I was still expecting a flotilla of anti-submarine vessels to close in on us. We slowed down and listened, but heard nothing. Feeling it was imperative to get as far from the scene as possible by daylight, since I was sure submarine-chasers would be on the spot before long, I made a bold decision to surface almost at once and get away on the main engines.

When we came up, only two miles from the shore, the firing had ceased. At this distance we were not visible against the background of the islands to the westward and our surfacing produced no reaction from the enemy. We started the engines and proceeded at full speed to the southward. Five miles from the shore we doubled back eastward and passed out through the Malacca Passage.

It was remarkable that we had got away without a single casualty, but the most surprising feature of the whole incident was that we had seen no enemy ship of any kind. Perhaps the Jap soldiery were jealous of their naval forces and hoped to win the kudos of sinking us unaided. If so, they had been very stupid: properly organized land-and-sea co-operation should have had us absolutely cold.

The Moving Light

After the major and the leading seaman had recovered from the shock of their experience, they told me the story of what had happened when they reached the beach.

As they neared the shore they got the impression that the flashing light was moving gradually left, and finally it seemed to recede into what appeared to be a little creek, thickly surrounded with trees and bushes, and very dark. When the boat touched bottom, the leading seaman got out and waded up to the entrance to the creek. The torch was still flashing.

And then he heard the Sumatran's voice, more high-pitched than usual and calling out in an agitated manner from the head of the creek. He said he was wounded and would have to be carried. "It will need both of you. The major must come, too," he said.

The leading seaman did not like the sound of this, and returned to the boat for consultation. While they were discussing the situation in low tones they became aware of rustling noises in the undergrowth to the side of the creek.

"The whole thing stinks to me," said the major. "Come on, we're going to beat it. Jump in."

As he started rowing away from the shore, the pandemonium broke loose. Presently, when the machine-gun fire began to get pretty close, they decided that the leading seaman should hop out and swim astern, both to reduce the target and to give them a second chance if one of them should be hit. It was a nightmare journey, and they thought they would never make it.

We speculated miserably on what had happened to the Sumatran. It was possible that he had deliberately betrayed us, but from the description of the way he had spoken in the creek, it looked rather as if he had somehow got caught, spilt the beans under torture, and had then been forced to act as a decoy. The thought of his probable subsequent fate cast a gloom over our spirits for the remainder of the patrol.

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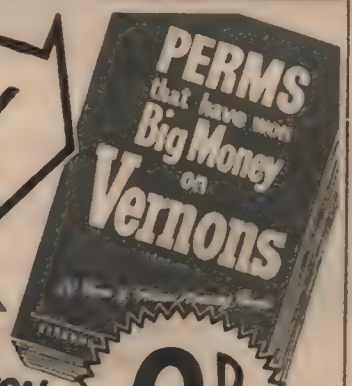

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THE LONG DROP

Continued from page 14

the descent and edged back. "No, I can't, I simply can't."

Now most folk have a particular fear of some sort. A surprising lot are sickened by steepness. The physical feeling is beastly, a void in the stomach and a watery weakness in the knees. I thought not one whit less of her for being scared of a slope that a shepherd would scuttle down at speed.

David sighed humorously. "O.K. We'll have to plug all the way up again, and down that long shoulder."

"Aren't I a nuisance to him?" said Netta, laughing, but she was embarrassed all the same.

At that moment, something rose in the air above Black Crag. Its size and its broad wings proclaimed it a buzzard, a bird so plentiful in our parts that we seldom give it a second glance. But I gave this one a second and a third, and continued to watch keenly. Its legs were feathered to the feet, and towards the tail gleamed whiteness. Without any doubt it was not a common but a rough-legged buzzard, rarest of the rare.

As I turned to David, I noticed that his eyes were watching not the buzzard but me; and they were suddenly very shrewd.

I said: "Wasn't that a rough-legged buzzard?"

"That's right," he said. "I'd be glad if you kept it to yourself."

"All right. Been watching it?"

"Yes." He pointed. "They're building a nest on that ledge. I spotted them first a week ago. That's why I brought Netta up today, to have a look at them. I hope they'll be left alone."

I nodded, knowing what must be on his mind. These days, rare eggs fetch such prices, the collecting of them is a paying game. I know one man in these parts who received ten guineas for a clutch of peregrine's eggs. That man, Joe Marsh, is the most intrepid climber in the country. As a species grows rare, the price of the eggs soars. Men like Joe Marsh receive high offers from the collectors, and soon the species becomes extinct. The laws dealing with the protection of wild birds are well-meaning but futile. Could the police, for instance, perch on Hardrigg continuously for the thirty days of incubation, guarding the eggs of the rough-legged buzzard until they were safely hatched?

David said: "I'll be up here often, keeping an eye on them."

Netta wrinkled her shapely nose and smiled at me. "I'm getting used to playing second fiddle to a buzzard."

I scrambled up with them to the spine of the ridge, where they had to follow the long, slow curve to the dale instead of the time-saving descent down the fell-breast. There we parted and on my way past the cairn I had another close view of one of the buzzards. Their nesting site was on a ledge about eighteen inches wide. It lay at the base of a sheer drop of some sixty feet. Beneath that the rock dropped glassily for three or four yards to a second ledge. I could picture Netta peering reluctantly over into space and feeling that the whole fell was swaying and trying to pitch her into eternity.

It was my last glimpse of the place for some weeks. The lambing down in the dale kept me busy. But eventually news of the buzzards reached me via David. Several times he walked across one of the lambing fields to me, and with the air of an excited conspirator explained how things were getting on. There was a sort of eager, nervous tension about him, as if the clutch of three eggs had become his personal responsibility. He was going up there every other day, his hopes and anxieties increasing as the climax of hatching drew nearer.

"I believe you and Netta and I are the only people who know of them," he told me.

I wondered. Fell farmers and shepherds are not unobservant, and they talk freely among themselves. It would be surprising if Joe Marsh had not picked up a whisper of the news from somewhere.

What I had feared came to pass. Joe Marsh set off for Black Crag with his tackle one Sunday morning. He struck straight up the Hardrigg breast to the south of the Crag, reached the spine of the ridge and went along to the point overlooking the buzzards' ledge. There, between a crack in the rock, he hammered in the iron spike he had brought with him. To this he fixed his rope. He was going to shin down sailor-fashion.

The male buzzard rose up in noisy alarm, filling the silence with its harsh cry, a sound like "pee-ou."

That morning, David had persuaded Netta to go up with him. Because of her fear of steepness, they had to ascend by the long, slow route along the ridge. But for its blind curve and many hummocks they might have caught sight of Marsh scrambling up the short way. When they were some distance from the cairn, they heard the shrill crying, and saw the buzzard circling and stalling. It was nothing unusual and yet David had a twinge of uneasiness. He quickened his pace.

The next thing he saw, as they approached the cairn, was a bit of iron jutting out from the lip of the crag and a knotted rope dangling over into space. He turned white and broke into a run.

Flat on his chest, he lay and peered over. Netta joined him. Down below, Joe Marsh had just reached the ledge and was edging towards the nest. He had released his hold of the rope, which ended about four feet above the ledge. The female buzzard rose from the nest, screaming and circling.

David made a queer little sound between his teeth. His eyes were burning. He snatched at the rope, drew it

"Very good. Any other references besides your mother?"

high out of Marsh's reach. Marsh's head jerked round and up.

"Leave those eggs alone!" shouted David.

Marsh stared up at him with hard, pale blue eyes. With his wide, thick shoulders, powerful arms and his dour, impassive face, he looked a dangerous customer.

"Let down yon rope."

"On one condition—that you won't touch those eggs."

Marsh said in a voice made more menacing by its quietness: "When I get at you. . . ."

Netta shivered. There was something elemental about him.

She said shakily: "You'd better not interfere, David. I know it's vile of him. But don't forget we live here and some time or other he'll——"

But David's face had the fervour of a crusader. He called down to Marsh: "You've got your choice. Take those eggs and you stay there. Better make up your mind soon. The weather's changing."

That was true. Out towards the south-west the sky was smearing over, a steely grey, streaked by thin, ragged, darker clouds. Odd sighs of wind were murmuring out of the silence. In an hour or so it would be raining, and likely blowing great guns.

MARSH never stirred. He stood there, staring up, the two buzzards screaming and swooping and diving. They were still at a respectful distance, but some of their glides brought them a little closer.

At length Marsh spoke. "Let down yon rope," he said. There was no fury in his tone, but something worse, something stony, reminding Netta of the merciless rocks around her.

She whispered: "What's the use, David? You can't stop him. You can't. You daren't leave him on that ledge. It would be——"

David called: "Either you give your promise or you stay there. Which is it to be?"

"You fool," said Marsh in that horribly quiet way.

"David." She touched his arm. She was getting more afraid. "Listen. If he gives his word and you let him have the rope, he'll be up in no time. He'll be after you. He could kill you with one hand. Let him take the eggs. You can't do anything."

He turned his thin, taut face towards her. He was nervous, but fanatically determined. "I'll risk that. If he gives his word, I believe he'll keep it. And if he turns ugly——"

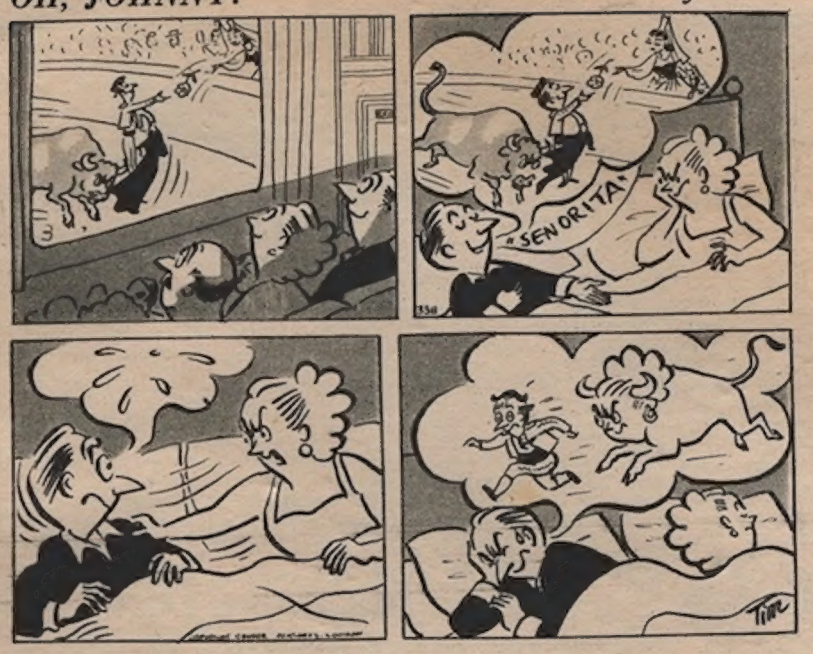
She gave him an imploring glance. He smiled at her reassuringly. Down below, the buzzards were still swooping and weaving and screaming, "pee-ou, pee-ou." And more gusts of wind were moaning out of nowhere.

Marsh opened his mouth. "When I get at you——"

One of the buzzards, growing bolder, swept so close to his head that he instinctively jerked. His right foot stepped back a couple of inches, an inch too far. He swayed, clawed at the air, went over.

Netta, appalled, closed her eyes. David said: "Oh, God!" The buzzards soared, planed down, perched on

OH, JOHNNY! *by TIM*



a fluke of rock and watched their nest.

But it was not final tragedy—not yet. Joe Marsh had fallen about twelve feet on to the lower ledge. He lay there, huddled and groaning. They could see his head and shoulders. Between him and the ledge above the rock was a polished wall etched by one crack too slight to offer a hold to an acrobat.

David ran his tongue along his lips. He said: "I'll have to get him up somehow."

She wanted to wind her arms round him and hold him back. But that could not be. She dared to survey the empty drop, and her words came out, urgent and breathless. "It's hopeless, David. There's no way of reaching that lower ledge. We'll have to go down to the dale for help."

He said: "That'll take an hour and a half. To raise a party with ropes and get back here—" He considered the threatening sky. "By that time—no. I must go down to him."

"You can't!"

"I can," he said gently. "That scarf of yours might do the job. Let me have it."

SHE unwound the thick woollen scarf from her neck. Her eyes were desperate with pleading, but she said nothing. He took the scarf, tied it around his own neck, and said: "My dear, don't worry. Shinning down that rope's easy enough. When I get to the ledge, I'm going to use this scarf to help me reach the lower one. It'll be all right. You see."

Her face was grey as she watched him go hand over hand down the rope. She need not have been anxious about this stage. To a fit young man it was simple. Yet the effect of watching was to send her sense of balance into whirling nausea.

His boots touched the ledge. He took the scarf from his neck, knotted it bulkily at one end, searched the rock, and found what he wanted, a deep crack in the lip of it. Into the crack he wedged the knot, gave it a tug to test it, and lowered himself with the aid of the scarf. Suspended from the end of it, he had only to drop a couple of feet.

He stooped over Marsh. "Think you can stand, if I help you?"

"Ay." Marsh sweated a little with pain, and slid his hand along his left leg.

"Bone broken?"

"Nay. 'Tis the ankle. Splintered, likely."

He coaxed himself to a sitting position.

David said: "If I give you a bunk, you could reach the end of that scarf. Could you pull yourself up by your arms?"

"I'll try."

"When you get to the ledge, you'll have to loosen the scarf and lower it to me and give me a pull up. I can't reach it from here."

Marsh nodded. He had the calmness of his kind. With David's hands pulling under his armpits, he struggled to his feet, winced at the stabbing of his left ankle, and leaned against the wall of rock for a rest. Above, Netta was watching in utter stillness.

"Ready?" said David.

"Ay."

His face to the wall, Marsh stretched as high as he could. David stooped, got his shoulder under Marsh's buttocks, and started to straighten himself by straining inches. Marsh's fingers closed on the end of the scarf. He gave it a jerk to test its security. There was a clinking noise. Tiny fragments of rock spattered down, and the scarf came away loose in his hand. The flaked rock, always unreliable, had crumbled from the crack and allowed the knot to slide through.

Above, Netta swallowed a scream. She saw them sway as the scarf came loose. But Marsh was clambering down safely off David's shoulder. The two men looked at each other, and Marsh said with a calmness that did him credit: "There's no way up now." He pointed. "She'd better go down to the dale for help."

The sky was much darker. A stronger gust flailed about them, and the buzzards stalled against it, screaming.

David said: "It will mean at least three hours before they get here."

"It will. If we're not blown off, we'll be very lucky."

He held the scarf in one hand, and it streamed vibrating in another swirl of wind.

David looked up at Netta staring down at them. Her face was set and bloodless. He started to say: "An eighty-foot rope's what we want. Tell them that——"

Her head shook. She was saying in a choked voice: "No. You can't last three hours. You'll be——"

"Yes, we can, my dear." His voice held confidence. But privately he believed that their chances were slender. If the wind reached anything like gale force, they would get colder and colder, and numbed limbs meant the ebbing of strength, exhaustion, the inability to hang on to life.

Marsh must have read his thoughts. He said bluntly: "I give two to one against our chances."

What followed next had the nature and quality of some nightmare, both to Netta and David. Refusing to look down, ignoring her dizziness, she eased her legs over the ledge, caught hold of the rope, and commenced to lower herself.

DAVID yelled at her to go back. She took no notice. Her feet touched the upper ledge. By her expression and her movements she might have been a sleep-walker. She was near to the cracking point of willpower.

She stood above them. She said: "Throw me the scarf."

"Ay," said Marsh, tied one end of it to a heavy knife he took from his pocket, to make it fling more easily, and stretched himself. David gave him a bunk. Marsh swung the scarf and, leaning over, she caught the weighted end of it. Her eyes were fixed, almost unseeing. She tied an even bulkier knot, found a loose bit of stone, and wedged that and the knot into the crack.

Marsh turned to her and said brutally: "Go on up." It was a good thing. Sympathy might have snapped the last shreds of her nerve. She took hold of the rope, her palms moist, her knees seemingly made of water, and somehow forced herself to climb it. As David told me afterwards, he realized for the first time the full meaning of the old saying about the heart in the mouth.

Marsh and David followed. Netta was lying on the firm, safe ground, clinging to it, waiting for it to stop heaving and swaying. David knelt by her side, his arms around her. Below, the buzzards wheeled and glided and returned to their nest.

It was Marsh who started talking. The glimmer in his eyes might have been a smile. He looked towards Netta and said: "If I was as scared on rock as you, I'd keep clear. Ay. But by gum, you're a good 'un!" THE END

WOMAN IN HIS LIFE

Continued from page 11

can't say that I remember definitely."

Dr. Livesey twisted the ring on his finger. "I'm afraid there's a little something there, Mr. Sander."

His mouth went quite dry.

The doctor said slowly: "You might have had rheumatic fever when you were a child, or perhaps it was something else. At any rate, it damaged the valves of your heart. You know the way a valve works on a pump; it opens and closes, so that the water can only go one way. Your heart valves were damaged somehow, and it left scar tissue, so that they can't open and close properly. Therefore, the pump doesn't work quite as well as it should."

Sander thought he could almost hear blood gurgling and swishing in his heart. Surely he had heard it this morning in those terrible moments when life had been as uncertain as the flip of a coin. He had known, of course, that it must be his heart, but he couldn't accept that knowledge. Even now one last, childish hope came: that he would wake up in his own bed, back in the blessed world of routine, with only the memory of a bad dream remaining of this day. Might not all this dissolve—the solid desk, the doctor, the signet ring? No, it would not. And with that ultimate fantasy out of the way, he was suddenly anxious—as anxious as a gambler throwing away his last shilling—to know everything.

"Is it—serious, Doctor? I mean . . ."

"We can't make definite statements without a much more extensive examination," the doctor said. "You must understand this was not a complete examination, and that I'm not a heart specialist. We'll have to arrange for an electro-cardiograph and some X-rays."

Sander didn't really hear what he was saying. It would take a long time to digest this news.

"How serious is it, Doctor? I'm not afraid to hear it."

The doctor looked at him hard. "I want you to go and see a Dr. Gilbertson. He's one of the best heart men in Harley Street. I'll prescribe some tablets that you can take if you feel an attack coming on. But I want you to see Dr. Gilbertson as soon as possible. I'll phone him."

"Thanks," Sander said, and suddenly he was aware that the sun had gone, that it didn't make much difference whether or not he ever went back to the office, that nothing in the world would make much difference from now on.

Coming out into the busy street, he looked about him. Yesterday he had been a normal man, with things all in their proper place. Now things were distorted. Yet nothing had changed; it was just that he himself had been moved out of focus with everything else.

And he didn't think that he could take it. Every bite of food he put in his mouth from now on would taste different because it might be the last bite. All the long-range plans were now meaningless—the careful budgeting to buy new furniture, to pay off the mortgage in eight years. Now it would be only a question of planning to buy a cemetery plot.

He blinked in the sunshine, consciously gathering his resources. You couldn't go on this way, thinking graveyard thoughts. Sander breathed deeply and carefully, fighting down the panic that struck him again. The first

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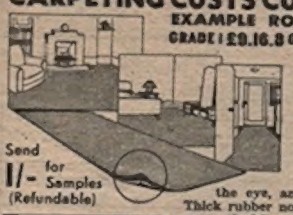

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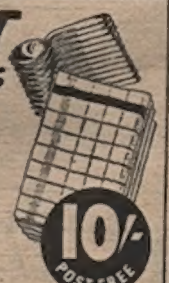

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thing he had to do was to consult the heart specialist. He found a telephone box and called the office to tell Miss Thomas he wouldn't be in for a while: and then he took a cab to the address the doctor had given him. There he had to wait for a time.

Dr. Gilbertson was an old man, shaggy and slightly untidy. Sander noticed that he had little tufts of hair growing on top of his ears.

"Dr. Livesey talked to me about you, Mr. Sander. He wants me to have a look at you."

"I know the worst," Sander said abruptly, as the stethoscope searched about his chest.

"Nonsense," the old man said. "We can't know for certain till we've had you X-rayed and electro-cardiographed."

If Dr. Livesey's examination had seemed like a long one, this examination went on for ever. Dr. Gilbertson asked the same questions about difficulty in breathing, about pains; there was the same coughing and breathing and listening and waiting.

"And now," Dr. Gilbertson said briskly, "I'll arrange for these special investigations. Then I'd like you to come back tomorrow."

"Tomorrow?" Sander felt that he couldn't possibly spend a night not knowing. "Couldn't you do it all now—today? I can wait while they develop the things or whatever they do with them."

The old man looked at him, and Sander saw that there was kindness in his eyes. "If you're as anxious as all that, I suppose we can."

It was later, much later, after the machines had delved into him and he had stared at countless magazines, when the doctor saw him again, this time in a small room at the hospital where the X-rays had been done.

"We've got it all here." He picked up an X-ray negative and dropped it without looking at it. "I know you don't want any fairy tales, so I'll tell you right away it's bad, Mr. Sander. In your particular case, there's very little that can be done in the way of treatment. I'd suggest a few weeks' rest if you can manage it, but the best thing is simply to take it easy, get as much sleep as possible, and cut down on salt and sugar. And you won't overeat—not ever."

Sander nodded. Now that it was absolutely definite, he felt a strange sense of relief. He knew it was the relief of utter hopelessness, the relief that means you've given up and simply don't care any more.

"I wonder if you could give me an estimate, Doctor? I mean, about how long?"

The old man shook his head. "Why does everyone ask that? It would be only a guess, a very rough guess," he said.

"I'd like to have it, Doctor."

"Well, if you must make me guess, I'd say about two years. You understand it's a process that doesn't stand still."

"Thanks, Doctor," Sander said.

"Wait." The doctor smiled. "Perhaps I should leave it at that. But I always want to help people in their thinking. Frankly, that's all I can do for you. If you don't mind sitting down and listening to me for a few minutes——"

"It's very kind of you," Sander said, not really caring, and they sat down in the deep leather chairs.

The doctor fitted a cigarette into a holder and lighted it. He offered Sander a cigarette, too.

Sander hesitated. "Do you think——?"

"No appreciable effect, I'd say. In moderation, of course."

"What can you tell me?"

"Very little—just one thought, really, but it might help. It happens that my wife had an incurable disease; she died many years ago. There was one thing she learned, and I want to tell you what it was. You see, I tried to comfort her because—well, the usual reaction to having anything like that is to ask yourself why it had to be you. You get bitter. It seems such a tiny thing, a little damaged tissue or a

slight chemical imbalance, that it strikes you as being a damn' shame to have everything spoiled that way. I knew this very well, and so I would try to cheer her up. Then one day she told me not to give her any more sympathy, because she didn't need it. And she explained how she had thought it all out. Life, she said, is a gift—the greatest gift of all. And so you should be thankful for it even if it isn't quite perfect. She said she had already had her share of sunrises and bird songs and love and music; she had had being." The old man moved his hands vaguely. "Perhaps if you just try to think of it in that light."

Sander stood up. "Thank you very much, Doctor. I'll try."

He went back to the office to lie to Miss Thomas that it was nothing serious, to read all the little slips of paper she had made out about telephone calls, visitors, and everything of importance, as she put it. In some obscure way, her ghastly efficiency had always annoyed him, but now he didn't mind it. In fact, when he said good night he felt almost tender towards her.

He left a little earlier so that he wouldn't have to sprint for the bus: these precautions would be part of his existence from now on. And smoking—this would be a rare luxury. He had decided he would smoke only one cigarette after each meal and one on the way home. So the cigarette he lighted on the way to the bus was his first since the one he'd had at the hospital. And it tasted better than any cigarette he could remember.

Maybe—he stared out of the window at the rushing fields—maybe this was the key to the whole thing. The fact that you didn't have unlimited time to enjoy things should, if you looked at it logically, add the enjoyment of rarity. So that one smoke could be more pleasurable than twenty and one year happier than twenty. Life was a gift, the old man had said, a gift to be cherished gratefully. And when you received a gift, you didn't spend all your time examining it for flaws.

But how about the undone things—the things never to be done? Things like walking in odd, tropical streets, smelling all the new smells and hearing the new sounds, or rambling through ancient little foreign towns. Perhaps that was all right, too. For hadn't he done those things, all of them, and even more beautiful and fantastic things, in his own mind? Reality could never make them more real to him.

He got off the bus and walked home slowly, deliberately relaxing his mind and body. It was different, this homecoming, different from any other homecoming he had ever known, for today he had not been merely to the city, but to the edge of eternity. Terror had travelled with him, to lead him to the brink of the ultimate abyss.

He walked up the driveway towards the white house, under the pergola he had built, past the rose bushes he had planted, and watched the two children dash round from the back to greet him—little Carol to be picked up and hugged, Larry to be squeezed by the shoulders, as befitted a man. Their eyes looked up to him, loving him. His gift, after all, was a wonderful gift, perhaps all the more wonderful because it would never be tarnished by time or made ordinary by familiarity. And Sander's mind flashed in an instant over all the beauty he had ever known and all the fantasies of beauty—rain at the windows, clover-sweet summer air, the shivering thrill of dawn, the remembered lines of his own roof, and the shape of his garden. And, as he reached the door, all the different parts moved together and fused into one picture. Everything was just right, just exactly right.

The door opened and Gwenda was standing there, smiling at him. "Hallo, darling," he said, and as she came towards him, he saw how beautiful, how wonderfully beautiful, she was. THE END

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

The photograph on page 31 is of Margaret Leighton as a child.

£250 DOUBLED CASH for this XWORD

£200 1st Prize—£50 amongst 1st Runners-up—Up to 500 Prizes for 2nd Runners-up

INSTRUCTIONS: First complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues on right. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

In adjudication all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.) and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink not pencil. Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated October 18.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

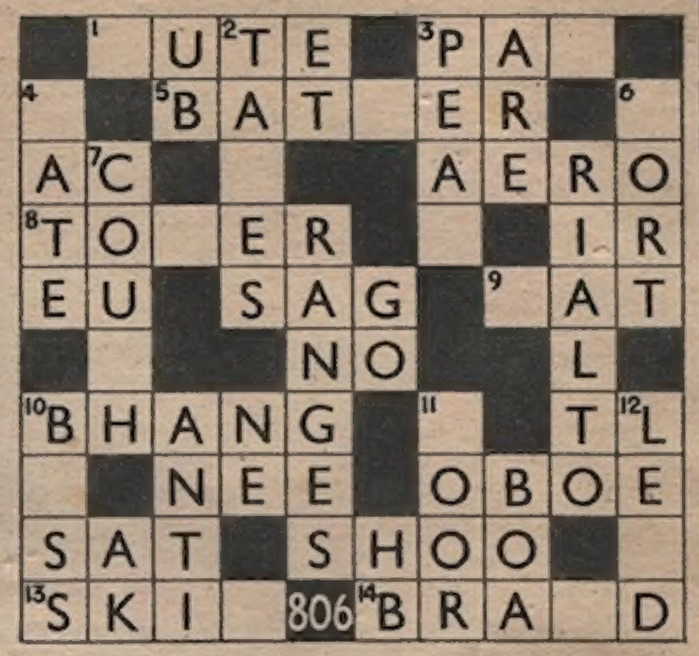
ADDRESS ENTRY: Xword No. 806, "JOHN BULL," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

Across Clues — **XWORD 806**

1. Composers might make effective use of
3. Good this often makes life easier for a man
5. Staying in for a long spell, one can get exhausted
8. Old one may begin to totter dangerously
9. A man grows attached to his favourite one
13. Literary critic very familiar with a particular author's work may find one very easy to
14. This is often used as a means of distinction

Down Clues

2. Discrimination has to be shown in collection of these
3. Exhilarates and awes at the same time
4. Railings as a rule are connected with
6. This sends a signal at a particular time
7. May perhaps warn of impending collapse
10. Probably comes successfully through difficult passage
11. A farmer doesn't expect to pay much for such land
12. Many a man hastily promises to do this, only to fail



CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
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No.		2s.

(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)

I enclose P.O. value..... No.....

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XWORD 806

Closing Postmark MONDAY, OCT. 6

XWORD 801 RESULT

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 3, Wares. 5, Fall. 6, Aces. 7, Beam. 9, Mum. 12, Paths. 15, Clapped. DOWN: 1, Gates or Rates. 2, Blame. 4, Scamps. 8, Ankles. 10, Tarn. 11, Taste. 13, Duel. 14, Mad.

OUTRIGHT WINNER of £100 plus £25 HOLIDAY AWARD: Mrs. McConnell, 20 Scholes P. Avenue, Scarborough.

Awards value £25 for 1st Runners-up shared by 10 entrants, each of whom receives Summer Surprise Parcel in addition. Useful "Signpost" Prizes awarded to 2nd Runners-up.

SHE WALKED INTO £500!

EVER made *Bullets* your "companion" for a stroll? One JOHN BULL reader who has just shown the value of doing that is Mrs. E. I. Dyer ("Little House," Gosfield, Halstead, Essex). As this fifty-year-old housewife (seen on right) exercised her bull-terrier one evening, she was making up *Bullets*. Her thoughts turned to the Queen . . . of the magnificent job she is doing and the concern people feel at the amount of hard work Her Majesty undertakes.

In a matter of minutes Mrs. Dyer had turned these thoughts into the £500 First Prize *Bullet*: DOESN'T MAKE SENSE —"LONG LIVE—" *Overworking* QUEEN!

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"Bullets" Winners No. 1,849

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£25: E. Earnshaw, 2 The Elms West, Sunderland: THE TRUE BRITISH SPIRIT—AGES MATURED—"COWERS" CONCEAL.

OTHER AWARDS. £10: S. Lay, 3 Norris Terrace, Gossoms End, Gt. Berkhamsted: ON THE WAY TO DOCTOR'S—BUT MET JOVIAL FRIEND! £9: A. J. Ward, "Woodlands," 16 Sutherland Avenue, Biggin Hill: BRITONS ARE OPTIMISTS, SO—CIVIL DEFENCE RECRUITERS *Gloomy*! £8: E. Ward, 4 Colindale Road, Liverpool: SHOOK THE EARTH—THEIR "ORANGE-BLOSSOM PETALS" DROPPING. £7: E. A. Mousley, 41 Tapton Hill Road, Sheffield: AS A SPECIAL TREAT—FIVE PASSENGERS MAY STAND! £6: N. Burgess, Harwood Villa, Brinnington Road, Stockport: THE CIGARETTE DROPPED AND—OAKS, CHESTNUTS, SYCAMORES—*Ashes*! £5: S. M. Dodd, 102 Welsh Row, Nantwich, Cheshire: SONNY'S COMIC—CAUSES "SHRIEKS"—AFTER DARK! £5: S. Taylor, 11 Rochdale Terrace, Hyson Green, Nottingham: PRICES AND WAGES—ADJUSTED—THEN *Hours* WRONG!

For ten winners of £2 10s. see "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*.

50 *Bullets* Season Tickets and 1,500 "Good Shot" Prizes have also been posted.

HOW TO WIN

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* on right. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in merit order; test—cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are full rate. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not over 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank given.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests (in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated October 25, and in JOHN BULL, dated November 1), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See *Daily Herald* on Saturday, October 18, for early news of *Bullets* No. 1,854 result.)

NOTE. You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in the same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "Combined," top left-hand corner.

On Prosperity's Plane
Across The Atlantic
Krupp And Co.
If We're Honest
Gigantic Problem
At The End Of The Day
Television Fever
A Waste Of Time
Within Reach
The Man Responsible
Heartless
Short-lived Triumph
Womanly Wisdom
When Dad Retires
More Trouble
Climbing The Ladder
Spoilt Everything
Snobbery
The Waitress Smiled And
Thrill For The Crowd

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

In The Name Of.....
When Somebody.....
Boy With A.....
Rushed For The.....
Why She's So.....
.....In The Village

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,854, "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

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Closing Postmark **1,854** Monday, Oct. 6

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